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THE

WORKS

Of the late RIGHT HONORABLE

HENRY ST. JOHN,

LORD VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

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A

LETTER

ON THE

SPIRIT

OF

PATRIOTISM.

ON THE

SPIRIT

OF

PATRIOTISM.

My Lord, 1736.

YOU have engaged me on a ſubject, which interrupts the ſeries of thoſe letters I was writing to you; but it is one, which, I confeſs, I have very much at heart. I ſhall therefore, explain myſelf fully, nor bluſh to reaſon on principles that are out of faſhion among men, who intend nothing by ſerving the public, but to feed their avarice, their vanity, and their luxury, without the ſenſe of any duty they owe to God or man.

IT ſeems to me, that in order to maintain the moral ſyſtem of the world at a certain point, far below that of ideal perfection, for we are made capable of conceiving what we are incapable of attaining; but, however, ſufficient upon the whole to conſtitute a ſtate eaſy and happy, or at the worſt

tolerable: I ſay, it ſeems to me, that the Author of nature has thought fit to mingle, from time to time, among the ſocieties of men, a few, and but a few, of thoſe on whom he is graciouſly pleaſed to beſtow a larger proportion of the ethereal ſpirit, than is given in the ordinary courſe of his providence to the ſons of men. Theſe are they who engroſs almoſt the whole reaſon of the ſpecies; who are born to inſtruct, to guide, and to preſerve: who are deſigned to be the tutors and the guardians of human kind. When they prove ſuch, they exhibit to us examples of the higheſt virtue, and the trueſt piety: and they deſerve to have their feſtivals kept, inſtead of that pack of anachorites and enthuſiaſts, with whoſe names the kalendar is crowded and diſgraced. When theſe men apply their talents to other purpoſes, when they ſtrive to be great, and deſpiſe being good, they commit a moſt ſacrilegious breach of truſt; they pervert the means, they defeat, as far as lies in them, the deſigns of providence, and diſturb, in ſome ſort, the ſyſtem of infinite wiſdom. To miſapply theſe talents is the moſt diffuſed, and, therefore, the greateſt of crimes in it's nature and conſequences; but to keep them unexerted, and unemployed, is a crime too. Look about you, my Lord, from the palace to the cottage; you will find that the bulk of mankind is made to breathe the air of this atmoſphere, to roam about this globe, and to conſume, like the courtiers of ALCINOUS, the fruits of the earth. Nos numerus ſumus, et fruges conſumere nati. When they have trod this inſipid round a certain number of years, and begot others to do the ſame after them, they have lived: and if they have performed, in ſome tolerable degree, the ordinary moral duties of life, they have done all they were born to do. Look about you again, my Lord, nay look into your own breaſt, and you will find that there are ſuperior ſpirits, men who ſhew even from their infancy, tho it be not always perceived by others, perhaps

haps not always felt by themſelves, that they were born for ſomething more, and better. Theſe are the men to whom the part I mentioned is aſſigned. Their talents denote their general deſignation: and the opportunities of conforming themſelves to it, that ariſe in the courſe of things, or that are preſented to them by any circumſtances of rank and ſituation in the ſociety to which they belong, denote the particular vocation, which it is not lawful for them to reſiſt, nor even to neglect. The duration of the lives of ſuch men as theſe is to be determined, I think, by the length and importance of the parts they act, not by the number of years that paſs between their coming into the world, and their going out of it. Whether the piece be of three, or five acts, the part may be long: and he, who ſuſtains it through the whole, may be ſaid to die in the fulneſs of years; whilſt he, who declines it ſooner, may be ſaid not to live out half his days.

I HAVE ſometimes repreſented to myſelf the vulgar, who are accidentally diſtinguiſhed by the titles of king and ſubject, of lord and vaſſal, of nobleman and peaſant; and the few, who are diſtinguiſhed by nature ſo eſſentially from the herd of mankind, that, figure apart, they ſeem to be of another ſpecies, in this manner: the former come into the world, and continue in it, like German travellers in a foreign country. Every thing they meet has the grace of novelty; and they are fond alike of every thing that is new. They wander about from one object, to another, of vain curioſity, or inelegant pleaſure. If they are induſtrious, they ſhew their induſtry in copying ſigns, and collecting mottos and epitaphs. They loiter, or they trifle away their whole time: and their preſence or their abſence would be equally unperceived, if caprice or accident did not raiſe them often to ſtations, wherein their ſtupidity, their vices, or their follies, make them a public miſ-

fortune. The latter come into the world, or at leaſt continue in it after the effects of ſurprize and inexperience are over, like men who are ſent on more important errands. They obſerve with diſtinction, they admire with knowledge. They may indulge themſelves in pleaſure; but as their induſtry is not employed about trifles, ſo their amuſements are not made the buſineſs of their lives. Such men cannot paſs unperceived through a country. If they retire from the world, their ſplendor accompanies them, and enlightens even the obſcurity of their retreat. If they take a part in public life, the effect is never indifferent. They either appear like miniſters of divine vengeance, and their courſe through the World is marked by deſolation and oppreſſion, by poverty and ſervitude: or they are the guardian angels of the country they inhabit, buſy to avert even the moſt diſtant evil, and to maintain or to procure peace, plenty, and, the greateſt of human bleſſings, liberty.

From the obſervation, that ſuperiority of parts is often employed to do ſuperior miſchief, no conſequence can be drawn againſt the truth I endeavour to eſtabliſh. Reaſon collects the will of God from the conſtitution of things, in this as in other caſes; but in no caſe does the Divine power impel us neceſſarily to conform ourſelves to this will: and, therefore, from the miſapplication of ſuperior parts to the hurt, no argument can be drawn againſt this poſition, that they were given for the good, of mankind. Reaſon deceives us not: we deceive ourſelves, and ſuffer our wills to be determined by other motives. Montagne or Charron would ſay, l'homme ſe pipe, "man is at once his own ſharper, and his "own bubble." Human nature is her own bawd, ſays Tully, blanda conciliatrix, et quaſi lena ſui. He who conſiders the univerſal wants, imperfections, and vices of his kind, muſt agree that men were intended not only for ſociety, but to unite

unite in commonwealths, and to ſubmit to laws: legum idcirco omnes ſervi ſumus, ut liberi eſſe poſſimus. And yet this very man will be ſeduced by his own paſſions, or the paſſions and examples of others, to think, or to act as if he thought, the very contrary. So he who is conſcious of ſuperior endowments, ſuch as render him more capable, than the generality of men, to ſecure and improve the advantages of ſocial life, by preſerving the commonwealth in ſtrength and ſplendor, even he may be ſeduced to think, or to act as if he thought, that theſe endowments were given him for the gratification of his ambition, and his other paſſions; and that there is no difference between vice and virtue, between a knave and an honeſt man, but one, which a prince, who died not many years ago, aſſerted, "that men of great ſenſe were, therefore, "knaves, and men of little ſenſe were, therefore, honeſt." But in neither of theſe caſes will the truth and reaſon of things be altered, by ſuch examples of human frailty. It will be ſtill true, and reaſon will ſtill demonſtrate, that all men are directed, by the general conſtitution of human nature, to ſubmit to government, and that ſome men are in a particular manner deſigned to take care of that government on which the common happineſs depends. The uſe that reaſon will make of ſuch examples, will be only this, that ſince men are ſo apt, in every form of life and every degree of underſtanding, to act againſt their intereſt and their duty too, without benevolence to mankind, or regard to the divine will; it is the more incumbent on thoſe who have this benevolence and this regard at heart, to employ all the means that the nature of the government allows, and that rank, circumſtances of ſituation, or ſuperiority of talents, give them, to oppoſe evil, and promote good government; and contribute thus to preſerve the moral ſyſtem of the world at that point of perfection at leaſt, which ſeems to have been preſcribed to it by the great Creator of every ſyſtem of beings.

GIVE me leave now, my Lord, to caſt my eyes for a moment homeward, and to apply what I have been ſaying to the preſent ſtate of Britain. That there is no profuſion of the ethereal ſpirit to be obſerved among us, and that we do not abound with men of ſuperior genius, I am ready to confeſs; but, I think there is no ground for the complaints I have heard made, as if nature had not done her part in our age, as well as in former ages, by producing men capable of ſerving the commonwealth. The manners of our forefathers were, I believe, in many reſpects better: they had more probity perhaps, they had certainly more ſhow of honor, and greater induſtry. But ſtill nature ſows alike, tho we do not reap alike. There are, and as there always have been, there always will be, ſuch creatures in government as I have deſcribed above. Fortune maintains a kind of rivalſhip with wiſdom, and piques herſelf often in favor of fools as well as knaves. SOCRATES uſed to ſay, that altho no man undertakes a trade he has not learned, even the meaneſt; yet every one thinks himſelf ſufficiently qualified for the hardeſt of all trades, that of government. He ſaid this upon the experience he had in Greece. He would not change his opinion if he lived now in Britain. But, however, ſuch characters as theſe would do little hurt, generally ſpeaking, or would not do it long, if they ſtood alone. To do great hurt, ſome genius, ſome knowledge, ſome talents in ſhort, natural or acquired, are neceſſary: leſs indeed, far leſs than are required to do good, but always ſome. Yet, I imagine, not the worſt miniſter could do all the miſchief he does, by the miſapplication of his talents alone, if it were not for the miſapplication of much better talents than his, by ſome who join with him, and the non-application, or the faint and unſteady exerciſe of their talents by ſome who oppoſe him, as well as the general remiſſneſs of mankind in acquiring

acquiring knowledge, and improving the parts which God has given them, for the ſervice of the public. Theſe are the great ſprings of national misfortunes. There have been monſters in other ages, and other countries, as well as ours; but they never continued their devaſtations long, when there were heroes to oppoſe them. We will ſuppoſe a man imprudent, raſh, preſumptuous, ungracious, inſolent, and profligate in ſpeculation as well as practice. He can bribe, but he cannot ſeduce: he can buy, but he cannot gain: he can lye, but he cannot deceive. From whence then has ſuch a man his ſtrength? from the general corruption of the people, nurſed up to a full maturity under his adminiſtration; from the venality of all orders and all ranks of men, ſome of whom are ſo proſtitute, that they ſet themſelves to ſale, and even prevent application. This would be the anſwer, and it would be a true one as far as it goes; but it does not account for the whole. Corruption could not ſpread with ſo much ſucceſs, tho reduced into ſyſtem, and tho ſome miniſters, with equal impudence and folly, avowed it, by themſelves and their advocates, to be the principal expedient by which they governed, if a long and almoſt unobſerved progreſſion of cauſes and effects did not prepare the conjuncture. Let me explain it, and apply it, as I conceive it. One party had given their whole attention, during ſeveral years, to the project of enriching themſelves, and impoveriſhing the reſt of the nation, and, by theſe and other means, of eſtabliſhing their dominion under the government and with the favor of a family, who were foreigners, and therefore might believe, that they were eſtabliſhed on the throne by the good-will and ſtrength of this party alone. This party in general were ſo intent on theſe views, and many of them, I fear, are ſo ſtill, that they did not advert in time to the neceſſary conſequences of the meaſures they abetted: nor did they conſider, that the power they raiſed, and by which they hoped to govern their country, would govern them with the very rod of iron

they forged, and would be the power of a prince or miniſter, not that of a party long. Another party continued ſour, ſullen, and inactive, with judgments ſo weak, and paſſions ſo ſtrong, that even experience, and a ſevere one ſurely, was loſt upon them. They waited, like the Jews, for a MESSIAH, that may never come; and under whom, if he did come, they would be ſtrangely diſappointed in their expectations of glory, and triumph, and univerſal dominion. Whilſt they waited, they were marked out, like the Jews, a diſtinct race, hewers of wood and drawers of water, ſcarce members of the community, tho born in the country. All indifferent men ſtood as it were at a gaze: and the few, who were jealous of the court, were ſtill more jealous of one another; ſo that a ſtrength ſufficient to oppoſe bad miniſters was not eaſy to be formed. When this ſtrength was formed, and the inſufficiency or iniquity of the adminiſtration was daily expoſed to publick view, many adhered at firſt to the miniſter, and others were ſince gained to his cauſe, becauſe they knew nothing of the conſtitution of their own, nor of the hiſtory of other countries; but imagined wildly, that things always went as they ſaw them go, and that liberty has been, and therefore may be, preſerved, under the influence of the ſame corruption. Others perhaps were weak enough to be frightened at firſt, as ſome are hypocritical enough to pretend to be ſtill, with the appellations of Tory and Jacobite, which are always ridiculouſly given to every man who does not bow to the brazen image that the king has ſet up. Others again might be perſuaded, that no fatal uſe at leaſt would be made of the power acquired by corruption: and men of ſuperior parts might and may ſtill flatter themſelves, that if this power ſhould be ſo employed, they ſhall have time and means to ſtop the effects of it. The firſt of theſe are ſeduced by their ignorance and futility; the ſecond, if they are not hypocrites, by their prejudices; the third,

third, by their partiality and blind confidence; the laſt, by their preſumption; and all of them by the mammon of unrighteouſneſs, their private intereſt, which they endeavour to palliate and to reconcile as well as they can to that of the public: et caeca cupiditate corrupti, non intelligunt ſe, dum vendunt, et venire.

According to this repreſentation, which I take to be true, your Lordſhip will agree that our unfortunate country affords an example in proof of what is aſſerted above. The German travellers I ſpoke of, men of the ordinary or below the ordinary ſize of underſtanding, tho they are called by caprice, or lifted any other way into power, cannot do great and long miſchief, in a country of liberty; unleſs men of genius, knowledge, and experience, miſapply theſe talents, and become their leaders. A miniſterial faction would have as little ability to do hurt, as they have inclination to do good, if they were not formed and conducted by one of better parts than they; nor would ſuch a miniſter be able to ſupport, at the head of this truſty phalanx, the ignominious tyranny impoſed on his country, if other men, of better parts and much more conſequence than himſelf, were not drawn in to miſapply theſe parts to the vileſt drudgery imaginable; the daily drudgery of explaining nonſenſe, covering ignorance, diſguiſing folly, concealing and even juſtifying fraud and corruption: inſtead of employing their knowledge, their elocution, their ſkill, experience, and authority, to correct the adminiſtration and to guard the conſtitution. But this is not all: the example ſhews a great deal more. Your Lordſhip's experience, as well as mine, will juſtify what I am going to ſay. It ſhews further, that ſuch a conjuncture could not be rendered effectual to preſerve power in ſome of the weakeſt and ſome of the worſt hands in the kingdom, if there was not a non-application, or a

faint and unſteady exerciſe of parts on one ſide, as well as an iniquitous miſapplication of them on the other: and I cannot help ſaying, let it fall where it will, what I have ſaid perhaps already, that the former is a crime but one degree inferior to the latter. The more genius, induſtry, and ſpirit are employed to deſtroy, the harder the taſk of ſaving our country becomes; but the duty increaſes with the difficulty, if the principles on which I reaſon are true. In ſuch exigences it is not enough that genius be oppoſed to genius; ſpirit muſt be matched by ſpirit. They, who go about to deſtroy, are animated from the firſt by ambition and avarice, the love of power and of money: fear makes them often deſperate at laſt. They muſt be oppoſed, therefore, or they will be oppoſed in vain, by a ſpirit able to cope with ambition, avarice, and deſpair itſelf; by a ſpirit able to cope with theſe paſſions, when they are favored and fortified by the weakneſs of a nation, and the ſtrength of a government. In ſuch exigences there is little difference, as to the merit or the effect, between oppoſing faintly and unſteadily, and not oppoſing at all: nay the former may be of worſe conſequence, in certain circumſtances, than the latter. And this is a truth I wiſh with all my heart you may not ſee verified in our country, where many, I fear, undertake oppoſition not as a duty, but as an adventure: and looking on themſelves like volunteers, not like men liſted in the ſervice, they deem themſelves at liberty to take as much or as little of this trouble, and to continue in it as long, or end it as ſoon, as they pleaſe. It is but a few years ago that not the merchants alone, but the whole nation, took fire at the project of new exciſes. The project was oppoſed not on mercantile conſiderations and intereſts alone, but on the true principles of liberty. In parliament, the oppoſition was ſtrenuouſly enough ſupported for a time; but there was ſo little diſpoſition to guide and improve the ſpirit,

that the chief concern of thoſe who took the lead ſeemed applied to keep it down: and yet your Lordſhip remembers how high it continued againſt the projector, till it was calmed juſt before the elections of the preſent parliament, by the remarkable indolence and inactivity of the laſt ſeſſion of the laſt. But theſe friends of ours, my Lord, are as much miſtaken in their ethics, as the event will ſhew they have been in their politics.

The ſervice of our country is no chimerical, but a real duty. He who admits the proofs of any other moral duty, drawn from the conſtitution of human nature, or from the moral fitneſs and unfitneſs of things, muſt admit them in favor of this duty, or be reduced to the moſt abſurd inconſiſtency. When he has once admitted the duty on theſe proofs, it will be no difficult matter to demonſtrate to him, that his obligation to the performance of it is in proportion to the means and the opportunities he has of performing it; and that nothing can diſcharge him from this obligation as long as he has theſe means and theſe opportunities in his power, and as long as his country continues in the ſame want of his ſervices. Theſe obligations, then, to the public ſervice may become obligations for life on certain perſons. No doubt they may: and ſhall this conſideration become a reaſon for denying or evading them? On the contrary, ſure it ſhould become a reaſon for acknowledging and fulfilling them, with the greateſt gratitude to the Supreme Being, who has made us capable of acting ſo excellent a part, and with the utmoſt benevolence to mankind. Superior talents, and ſuperior rank amongſt our fellow-creatures, whether acquired by birth, or by the courſe of accidents, and the ſucceſs of our own induſtry, are noble prerogatives. Shall he, who poſſeſſes them, repine at the obligation they lay him under, of paſſing his whole life in the nobleſt occupation of which human nature is capable? To what higher ſtation,

to

to what greater glory can any mortal aſpire, than to be, during the whole courſe of his life, the ſupport of good, the controul of bad government, and the guardian of public liberty? To be driven from hence by ſucceſsful tyranny, by loſs of health or of parts, or by the force of accidents, is to be degraded in ſuch a manner as to deſerve pity, and not to incur blame; but to degrade ourſelves, to deſcend voluntarily, and by choice, from the higheſt to a lower, perhaps to the loweſt rank among the ſons of ADAM; to abandon the government of men for that of hounds and horſes, the care of a kingdom for that of a pariſh, and a ſcene of great and generous efforts in public life, for one of trifling amuſements and low cares, of ſloth and of idleneſs, what is it, my Lord? I had rather your Lordſhip ſhould name it than I. Will it be ſaid that it is hard to exact from ſome men, in favor of others, that they ſhould renounce all the pleaſures of life, and drudge all their days in buſineſs, that others may indulge themſelves in eaſe? it will be ſaid without grounds. A life dedicated to the ſervice of our country admits the full uſe, and no life ſhould admit the abuſe, of pleaſures: the leaſt are conſiſtent with a conſtant diſcharge of our public duty, the greateſt ariſe from it. The common, the ſenſual pleaſures to which nature prompts us, and which reaſon therefore does not forbid, tho ſhe ſhould always direct, are ſo far from being excluded out of a life of buſineſs, that they are ſometimes neceſſary in it, and are always heightened by it: thoſe of the table, for inſtance, may be ordered ſo as to promote that which the elder CATO calls vitae conjunctionem. In the midſt of public duties, private ſtudies, and an extreme old age, he found time to frequent the ſodalitates, or clubs of friends, at Rome, and to ſit up all night with his neighbours in the country of the Sabines. CATO's virtue often glowed with wine: and the love of women did not hinder CÆSAR from forming and executing the

greateſt projects that ambition ever ſuggeſted. But if CÆSAR, whilſt he labored to deſtroy the liberties of his country, enjoyed theſe inferior pleaſures of life, which a man who labors to ſave thoſe liberties may enjoy as well as he; there are ſuperior pleaſures in a buſy life, that CÆSAR never knew; thoſe, I mean, that ariſe from a faithful diſcharge of our duty to the commonwealth. Neither MONTAIGNE in writing his eſſays, nor DES CARTES in building new worlds, nor BURNET in framing an antediluvian earth, no, nor NEWTON in diſcovering and eſtabliſhing the true laws of nature on experiment and a ſublimer geometry, felt more intellectual joys, than he feels who is a real patriot, who bends all the force of his underſtanding, and directs all his thoughts and actions, to the good of his country. When ſuch a man forms a political ſcheme, and adjuſts various and ſeemingly independent parts in it to one great and good deſign, he is tranſported by imagination, or abſorbed in meditation, as much and as agreeably as they: and the ſatisfaction that ariſes from the different importance of theſe objects, in every ſtep of the work, is vaſtly in his favor. It is here that the ſpeculative philoſopher's labor and pleaſure end. But he, who ſpeculates in order to act, goes on, and carries his ſcheme into execution. His labor continues, it varies, it increaſes; but ſo does his pleaſure too. The execution indeed is often traverſed, by unforeſeen and untoward circumſtances, by the perverſeneſs or treachery of friends, and by the power or malice of enemies: but the firſt and the laſt of theſe animate, and the docility and fidelity of ſome men make amends for the perverſeneſs and treachery of others. Whilſt a great event is in ſuſpenſe, the action warms, and the very ſuſpenſe, made up of hope and fear, maintains no unpleaſing agitation in the mind. If the event is decided ſucceſsfully, ſuch a man enjoys pleaſure proportionable to the good he has done; a pleaſure like to that which is attributed to the Supreme Being, on a ſurvey of his

works.

works. If the event is decided otherwiſe, and uſurping courts, or overbearing parties prevail; ſuch a man has ſtill the teſtimony of his conſcience, and a ſenſe of the honor he has acquired, to ſoothe his mind, and ſupport his courage. For altho the courſe of ſtate-affairs be to thoſe who meddle in them like a lottery, yet it is a lottery wherein no good man can be a loſer: he may be reviled, it is true, inſtead of being applauded, and may ſuffer violence of many kinds. I will not ſay, like SENECA, that the nobleſt ſpectacle, which God can behold, is a virtuous man ſuffering, and ſtruggling with afflictions: but this I will ſay, that the ſecond CATO, driven out of the forum, and dragged to priſon, enjoyed more inward pleaſure, and maintained more outward dignity, than they who inſulted him, and who triumphed in the ruin of their country. But the very example of CATO may be urged, perhaps, againſt what I have inſiſted upon: it may be aſked, what good he did to Rome, by dedicating his whole life to her ſervice, what honor to himſelf, by dying at Utica? It may be ſaid, that governments have their periods, like all things human; that they may be brought back to their primitive principles during a certain time, but that when theſe principles are worn out in the minds of men, it is a vain enterpriſe to endeavour to renew them; that this is the caſe of all governments when the corruption of the people comes to a great pitch, and is grown univerſal; that when a houſe which is old and quite decayed, tho often repaired, not only cracks, but totters even from the foundations, every man in his ſenſes runs out of it, and takes ſhelter where he can, and that none but madmen continue obſtinate to repair what is irreparable, till they are cruſhed in the ruin; juſt ſo, that we muſt content ourſelves to live under the government we like the leaſt, when that form which we like the moſt is deſtroyed, or worn out; according to the counſel of DOLABELLA in one of his letters to CICERO. But, my Lord, if CATO could not ſave, he prolonged the life of liberty: the liberties

of

of Rome would have been loſt when CATILINE attacked them, abetted probably by CAESAR and CRASSUS, and the worſt citizens of Rome; and when CICERO defended them, abetted by CATO and the beſt. That CATO erred in his conduct, by giving way too much to the natural roughneſs of his temper, and by allowing too little for that of the Romans, among whom luxury had long prevailed, and corruption was openly practiſed, is moſt true. He was incapable of employing thoſe ſeeming compliances that are reconcileable to the greateſt ſteadineſs; and treated unſkilfully a crazy conſtitution. The ſafety of the commonwealth depended, in that critical conjuncture, on a coalition of parties, the ſenatorian and the equeſtrian: TULLY had formed it, CATO broke it. But if this good, for I think he was not an able, man erred in the particular reſpects I have ventured to mention, he deſerved moſt certainly the glory he acquired by the general tenor of his conduct, and by dedicating the whole labor of his life to the ſervice of his country. He would have deſerved more, if he had perſiſted in maintaining the ſame cauſe to the end, and would have died, I think, with a better grace at Munda than at Utica. If this be ſo, if CATO may be cenſured, ſeverely indeed, but juſtly, for abandoning the cauſe of liberty, which he would not, however, ſurvive; what ſhall we ſay of thoſe who embrace it faintly, purſue it irreſolutely, grow tired of it when they have much to hope, and give it up when they have nothing to fear?

MY Lord, I have inſiſted the more on this duty which men owe to their country, becauſe I came out of England, and continue ſtill, ſtrongly affected with what I ſaw when I was there. Our government has approached nearer, than ever before, to the true principles of it, ſince the revolution of one thouſand ſix hundred and eighty eight: and the acceſſion of

the preſent family to the throne has given the faireſt opportunities, as well as the juſteſt reaſons, for completing the ſcheme of liberty, and improving it to perfection. But it ſeems to me, that in our ſeparate world, as the means of aſſerting and ſupporting liberty are increaſed, all concern for it is diminiſhed. I beheld, when I was among you, more abject ſervility, in the manners and behaviour of particular men, than I ever ſaw in France, or than has been ſeen there, I believe, ſince the days of that Gaſcon, who, being turned out of the miniſter's door, leaped in again at his window. As to bodies of men, I dare challenge your Lordſhip, and I am ſorry for it, to produce any inſtances of reſiſtance to the unjuſt demands, or wanton will of a court, that Britiſh parliaments have given, comparable to ſuch as I am able to cite to the honor of the parliament of Paris, and the whole body of the law in that country, within the ſame compaſs of time. This abject ſervility may appear juſtly the more wonderful in Britain, becauſe the government of Britain has, in ſome ſort, the appearance of an oligarchy: and monarchy is rather hid behind it than ſhewn, rather weakened than ſtrengthened, rather impoſed upon than obeyed. The wonder, therefore, is to obſerve, how imagination and cuſtom, a giddy fool and a formal pedant, have rendered theſe cabals, or oligarchies, more reſpected than majeſty itſelf. That this ſhould happen in countries where princes, who have abſolute power, may be tyrants themſelves, or ſubſtitute ſubordinate tyrants, is not wonderful. It has happened often: but that it ſhould happen in Britain, may be juſtly an object of wonder. In theſe countries, the people had loſt the armour of their conſtitution: they were naked and defenceleſs. Ours is more complete than ever. But tho we have preſerved the armour, we have loſt the ſpirit, of our conſtitution: and therefore we bear, from little engroſſers of delegated power, what our fathers would not have ſuffered from true proprietors of the royal

authority. Parliaments are not only, what they always were, eſſential parts of our conſtitution, but eſſential parts of our adminiſtration too. They do not claim the executive power: no; but the executive power cannot be exerciſed without their annual concurrence. How few months, inſtead of years, have princes and miniſters now to paſs, without inſpection and controul? How eaſy, therefore, is it become to check every growing evil in the bud; to change every bad adminiſtration, to keep ſuch farmers of government in awe; to maintain, and revenge, if need be, the conſtitution? It is become ſo eaſy, by the preſent form of our government, that corruption alone could not deſtroy us. We muſt want ſpirit, as well as virtue, to periſh. Even able knaves would preſerve liberty in ſuch circumſtances as ours, and highwaymen would ſcorn to receive the wages, and do the drudgery of pick-pockets. But all is little, and low, and mean among us! Far from having the virtues, we have not even the vices, of great men. He who had pride inſtead of vanity, and ambition but equal to his deſire of wealth, could never bear, I do not ſay, to be the under-ſtrapper to any farmer of royal authority, but to ſee patiently one of them, at beſt his fellow, perhaps his inferior in every reſpect, lord it over him, and the reſt of mankind, diſſipating the wealth, and trampling on the liberties of his country, with impunity. This could not happen, if there was the leaſt ſpirit among us. But there is none. What paſſes among us for ambition, is an odd mixture of avarice and vanity: the moderation we have ſeen practiſed is puſillanimity, and the philoſophy that ſome men affect, is ſloth. Hence it comes that corruption has ſpred, and prevails.

I EXPECT little from the principal actors that tread the ſtage at preſent. They are divided, not ſo much as it has ſeemed, and as they would have it believed, about meaſures: the true

diviſion is about their different ends. Whilſt the miniſter was not hard puſhed, nor the proſpect of ſucceeding to him near, they appeared to have but one end, the reformation of the government. The deſtruction of the miniſter was purſued only as a preliminary, but of eſſential and indiſpenſable neceſſity to that end. But when his deſtruction ſeemed to approach, the object of his ſucceſſion interpoſed to the ſight of many, and the reformation of the government was no longer their point of view. They divided the ſkin, at leaſt in their thoughts, before they had taken the beaſt: and the common fear of hunting him down for others, made them all faint in the chace. It was this, and this alone, that has ſaved him, or has put off his evil day. Corruption, ſo much, and ſo juſtly complained of, could not have done it alone.

When I ſay that I expect little from the principal actors that tread the ſtage at preſent, I am far from applying to all of them what I take to be true of the far greateſt part. There are men among them who certainly intend the good of their country, and whom I love and honor for that reaſon. But theſe men have been clogged, or miſled, or over-borne by others; and, ſeduced by natural temper to inactivity, have taken any excuſe, or yielded to any pretence that favored it. That they ſhould rouſe, therefore, in themſelves, or in any one elſe, the ſpirit they have ſuffered, nay, helped to die away, I do not expect. I turn my eyes from the generation that is going off, to the generation that is coming on the ſtage. I expect good from them, and from none of them more than from you, my Lord. Remember, that the oppoſition, in which you have engaged at your firſt entrance into buſineſs, is not an oppoſition only to a bad adminiſtration of public affairs, but to an adminiſtration that ſupports itſelf by means, eſtabliſhes principles, introduces cuſtoms, repugnant to the conſtitution

tution of our government, and deſtructive of all liberty ; that you do not only combat preſent evils, but attempts to intail theſe evils upon you and your poſterity ; that if you ceaſe the combat, you give up the cauſe ; and that he, who does not renew, on every occaſion, his claim, may forfeit his right.

Our diſputes were formerly, to ſay the truth, much more about perſons than things ; or, at moſt, about particular points of political conduct, in which we ſhould have ſoon agreed, if perſons and perſonal intereſts had been leſs concerned, and the blind prejudice of party leſs prevalent. Whether the Big-endians, or the Little-endians got the better, I believe, no man of ſenſe and knowledge thought the conſtitution concerned ; notwithſtanding all the clamor raiſed at one time about the danger of the church, and at another about the danger of the proteſtant ſucceſſion. But the caſe is, at this time, vaſtly altered. The means of invading liberty more effectually by the conſtitution of the revenue, than it ever had been invaded by prerogative, were not then grown up into ſtrength. They are ſo now : and a bold and an inſolent is made of them. To reform the ſtate, therefore, is, and ought to be, the object of your oppoſition, as well as to reuſe form the adminiſtration. Why do I ſay as well ? It is ſo, and it ought to be ſo, much more. Wreſt the power of the government, if you can, out of hands that have employed it weakly and wickedly, ever ſince it was thrown into them by a ſilly bargain made in one reign, and a corrupt bargain made in another. But do not imagine this to be your ſole, or your principal, buſineſs. You owe to your country, to your honor, to your ſecurity, to the preſent, and to future ages, that no endeavours of yours be wanting to repair the breach that is made, and is increaſing daily in the conſtitution ; and to ſhut up, with all the bars and bolts of law, the

the principal entries through which theſe torrents of corruption have been let in upon us. I ſay, the principal entries; becauſe, however it may appear in pure ſpeculation, I think it would not be found in practice poſſible, no, nor eligible neither, to ſhut them up all. As entries of corruption none of them deſerve to be excepted: but there is a juſt diſtinction to be made, becauſe there is a real difference. Some of theſe entries are opened by the abuſe of powers neceſſary to maintain ſubordination and to carry on even good government, and therefore neceſſary to be preſerved in the crown, notwithſtanding the abuſe that is ſometimes made of them; for no human inſtitution can arrive at perfection, and the moſt that human wiſdom can do, is to procure the ſame or greater good, at the expence of leſs evil. There will be always ſome evil, either immediate or remote, either in cauſe or conſequence. But there are other entries of corruption, and theſe are by much the greateſt, for ſuffering of which to continue open, no reaſon can be aſſigned, or has been pretended to be aſſigned, but that which is, to every honeſt and wiſe man, a reaſon for ſhutting them up; the increaſe of the means of corruption, which are oftener employed for the ſervice of the oligarchy, than for the ſervice of the monarchy. Shut up theſe, and you will have nothing to fear from the others. By theſe, a more real and a more dangerous power has been gained to miniſters, than was loſt to the crown by the reſtraints on prerogative.

THERE have been periods when our government continued free, with ſtrong appearances of becoming abſolute. Let it be your glory, my Lord, and that of the new generation ſpringing up with you, that this government do not become abſolute at any future period, with the appearances of being free. However you may be employed, in all your counſels, in all your actions, keep this regard to the conſtitution always

always in ſight. The ſcene that opens before you is great, and the part that you will have to act, difficult. It is difficult, indeed, to bring men, from ſtrong habits of corruption, to prefer honor to profit, and liberty to luxury; as it is hard to teach princes the great art of governing all by all, or to prevail on them to practiſe it. But if it be a difficult, it is a glorious attempt; an attempt, worthy to exert the greateſt talents, and to fill the moſt extended life. Purſue it with courage, my Lord, nor deſpair of ſucceſs.

Deus haec fortaſſe benigna
Reducet in ſedem vice.

A parliament, nay, one houſe of parliament, is able, at any time, and at once, to deſtroy any corrupt plan of power. Time produces every day new conjunctures. Be prepared to improve them. We read, in the Old-teſtament, of a city that might have eſcaped divine vengeance, if five righteous men had been found in it. Let not our city periſh for want of ſo ſmall a number: and if the generation that is going off could not furniſh it, let the generation that is coming on furniſh a greater.

We may reaſonably hope that it will, from the firſt eſſays which your Lordſhip and ſome others of our young ſenators have made in public life. You have raiſed the hopes of your country by the proofs you have given of ſuperior parts. Confirm theſe hopes by proofs of uncommon induſtry, application, and perſeverance. Superior parts, nay, even ſuperior virtue, without theſe qualities, will be inſufficient to ſupport your character and your cauſe. How many men have appeared in my time, who have made theſe eſſays with ſucceſs, and have made no progreſs afterwards? Some have dropped, from their firſt:

firſt flights, down into the vulgar crowd, have been diſtinguiſhed, nay, heard of no more! others, with better parts, perhaps with more preſumption, but certainly with greater ridicule, have perſiſted in making theſe eſſays towards buſineſs all their lives, and have never been able to advance farther, in their political courſe, than a premeditated harangue on ſome choice ſubject. I never ſaw one of theſe important perſons ſit down after his oration, with repeated hear-hims ringing in his ears, and inward rapture glowing in his eyes, that he did not recal to my memory the ſtory of a conceited member of ſome parliament in France, who was over-heard, after his tedious harangue, muttering moſt devoutly to himſelf, Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, ſed nomini tuo da gloriam!

Eloquence has charms to lead mankind, and gives a nobler ſuperiority than power, that every dunce may uſe, or fraud, that every knave may employ. But eloquence muſt flow like a ſtream that is fed by an abundant ſpring, and not ſpout forth a little frothy water on ſome gaudy day, and remain dry the reſt of the year. The famous orators of Greece and Rome were the ſtateſmen and miniſters of thoſe commonwealths. The nature of their governments, and the humor of thoſe ages, made elaborate orations neceſſary. They harangued oftener than they debated: and the ars dicendi required more ſtudy and more exerciſe of mind, and of body too, among them, than are neceſſary among us. But as much pains as they took in learning how to conduct the ſtream of eloquence, they took more to enlarge the fountain from which it flowed. Hear Demosthenes, hear Cicero, thunder againſt Philip, Cataline, and Antony. I chuſe the example of the firſt, rather than that of Pericles, whom he imitated, or of Phocion, whom he oppoſed, or of any other conſiderable perſonage in Greece: and

and the example of CICERO rather than that of CRASSUS, or of HORTENSIUS, or of any other of the great men of Rome; becauſe the eloquence of theſe two has been ſo celebrated, that we are accuſtomed to look upon them almoſt as mere orators. They were orators indeed, and no man who has a ſoul can read their orations, after the revolution of ſo many ages, after the extinction of the governments, and of the people for whom they were compoſed, without feeling, at this hour, the paſſions they were deſigned to move, and the ſpirit they were deſigned to raiſe. But if we look into the hiſtory of theſe two men, and conſider the parts they acted, we ſhall ſee them in another light, and admire them in an higher ſphere of action. DEMOSTHENES had been neglected, in his education, by the ſame tutors who cheated him of his inheritance. CICERO was bred with greater advantage: and PLUTARCH, I think, ſays, that when he firſt appeared the people uſed to call him, by way of deriſion, the Greek, and the ſcholar. But whatever advantage of this kind the latter might have over the former, and to which of them ſoever you aſcribe the ſuperior genius, the progreſs which both of them made in every part of political knowledge, by their induſtry and application, was marvellous. CICERO might be a better philoſopher, but DEMOSTHENES was no leſs a ſtateſman: and both of them performed actions, and acquired fame, above the reach of eloquence alone. DEMOSTHENES uſed to compare eloquence to a weapon, aptly enough; for eloquence, like every other weapon, is of little uſe to the owner, unleſs he have the force and the ſkill to uſe it. This force and this ſkill DEMOSTHENES had in an eminent degree. Obſerve them in one inſtance among many. It was of mighty importance to PHILIP, to prevent the acceſſion of Thebes to the grand alliance that DEMOSTHENES, at the head of the Athenian commonwealth, formed againſt the growing power

of the Macedonians. PHILIP had emiſſaries and his ambaſſadors on the ſpot, to oppoſe to thoſe of Athens, and we may be aſſured that he neglected none of thoſe arts upon this occaſion, that he employed ſo ſucceſsfully on others. The ſtruggle was great, but DEMOSTHENES prevailed, and the Thebans engaged in the war againſt PHILIP. Was it by his eloquence alone that he prevailed, in a divided ſtate, over all the ſubtilty of intrigue, all the dexterity of negotiation, all the ſeduction, all the corruption, and all the terror that the ableſt and moſt powerful prince could employ? Was DEMOSTHENES wholly taken up with compoſing orations, and haranguing the people in this remarkable criſis? He harangued them, no doubt, at Thebes, as well as at Athens, and in the reſt of Greece, where all the great reſolutions of making alliances, waging war, or concluding peace, were determined in democratical aſſemblies. But yet haranguing was, no doubt, the leaſt part of his buſineſs, and eloquence was neither the ſole, nor the principal talent, as the ſtyle of writers would induce us to believe, on which his ſucceſs depended. He muſt have been maſter of other arts, ſubſerviently to which his eloquence was employed, and muſt have had a thorough knowledge of his own ſtate, and of the other ſtates of Greece, of their diſpoſitions, and of their intereſts relatively to one another, and relatively to their neighbours, to the Perſians particularly, with whom he held a correſpondence, not much to his honor in appearance, whatever he might intend by it: I ſay, he muſt have been maſter of many other arts, and have poſſeſſed an immenſe fund of knowledge, to make his eloquence in every caſe ſucceſsful, and even pertinent or ſeaſonable in ſome, as well as to direct it, and to furniſh it with matter whenever he thought proper to employ this weapon.

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LET us conſider TULLY on the greateſt theatre of the known world, and in the moſt difficult circumſtances. We are better acquainted with him than we are with DEMOSTHENES; for we ſee him nearer, as it were, and in more different lights. How perfect a knowledge had he acquired of the Roman conſtitution of government, eccleſiaſtical and civil; of the original and progreſs, of the general reaſons and particular occaſions of the laws and cuſtoms of his country; of the great rules of equity, and the low practice of courts; of the duty of every magiſtracy and office in the ſtate, from the dictator down to the lictor; and of all the ſteps by which Rome had riſen, from her infancy, to liberty, to power, and grandeur, and dominion, as well as of all thoſe by which ſhe began to decline, a little before his age, to that ſervitude which he died for oppoſing, but lived to ſee eſtabliſhed, and in which not her liberty alone, but her power, and grandeur, and dominion were loſt? How well was he acquainted with the Roman colonies and provinces, with the allies and enemies of the empire, with the rights and privileges of the former, the diſpoſitions and conditions of the latter, with the intereſts of them all relatively to Rome, and with the intereſts of Rome relatively to them? How preſent to his mind were the anecdotes of former times concerning the Roman and other ſtates, and how curious was he to obſerve the minuteſt circumſtances that paſſed in his own? His works will anſwer ſufficiently the queſtions I aſk, and eſtabliſh in the mind of every man who reads them the idea I would give of his capacity and knowledge, as well as that which is ſo univerſally taken of his eloquence. To a man fraught with all this ſtock of knowledge, and induſtrious to improve it daily, nothing could happen that was entirely new, nothing for which he was quite unprepared, ſcarce any effect whereof he had not conſidered the cauſe,

ſcarce any cauſe wherein his ſagacity could not diſcern the latent effect. His eloquence in private cauſes gave him firſt credit at Rome: but it was this knowledge, this experience, and the continued habits of buſineſs, that ſupported his reputation, enabled him to do ſo much ſervice to his country, and gave force and authority to his eloquence. To little purpoſe would he have attacked CATALINE with all the vehemence that indignation, and even fear, added to eloquence, if he had truſted to this weapon alone. This weapon alone would have ſecured neither him nor the ſenate from the poniard of that aſſaſſin. He would have had no occaſion to boaſt, that he had driven this infamous citizen out of the walls of Rome, abiit, exceſſit, evaſit, erupit, if he had not made it, beforehand, impoſſible for him to continue any longer in them. As little occaſion would he have had to aſſume the honor of defeating, without any tumult, or any diſorder, the deſigns of thoſe who conſpired to murder the Roman people, to deſtroy the Roman empire, and to extinguiſh the Roman name; if he had not united, by ſkill and management, in the common cauſe of their country, orders of men the moſt averſe to each other; if he had not watched all the machinations of the conſpirators in ſilence, and prepared a ſtrength ſufficient to reſiſt them at Rome, and in the provinces, before he opened this ſcene of villainy to the ſenate and the people: in a word, if he had not made much more uſe of political prudence, that is, of the knowledge of mankind, and of the arts of government, which ſtudy and experience give, than of all the powers of his eloquence.

SUCH was DEMOSTHENES, ſuch was CICERO, ſuch were all the great men whoſe memories are preſerved in hiſtory, and ſuch muſt every man be, or endeavour to be, if he has either ſenſe or ſentiment, who preſumes to meddle in affairs of government,

vernment, of a free government I mean, and hopes to maintain a diſtinguiſhed character in popular aſſemblies, whatever part he takes, whether that of ſupporting, or that of oppoſing. I put the two caſes purpoſely, my Lord, becauſe I have obſerved, and your Lordſhip will have frequent occaſions of obſerving, many perſons who ſeem to think that oppoſition to an adminiſtration requires fewer preparatives, and leſs conſtant application, than the conduct of it. Now, my Lord, I take this to be a groſs error, and, I am ſure, it has been a fatal one. It is one of thoſe errors, and there are many ſuch, which men impute to judgment, and which proceed from the defect of judgment, as this does from lightneſs, irreſolution, lazineſs, and a falſe notion of oppoſition; unleſs the perſons, who ſeem to think, do not really think in this manner, but, ſerving the public purely for intereſt, and not for fame, nor for duty, decline taking the ſame pains when they oppoſe without perſonal and immediate reward, as they are willing to take when they are paid for ſerving. Look about you, and you will ſee men eager to ſpeak, and keen to act, when particular occaſions preſs them, or particular motives excite them, but quite unprepared for either: and hence all that ſuperficiality in ſpeaking, for want of information; hence all that confuſion or inactivity, for want of concert; and all that diſappointment, for want of preliminary meaſures. They who affect to head an oppoſition, or to make any conſiderable figure in it, muſt be equal, at leaſt, to thoſe whom they oppoſe; I do not ſay, in parts only, but in application and induſtry, and the fruits of both, information, knowledge, and a certain conſtant preparedneſs for all the events that may ariſe. Every adminiſtration is a ſyſtem of conduct: oppoſition, therefore, ſhould be a ſyſtem of conduct likewiſe; an oppoſite, but not a dependent ſyſtem. I ſhall explain myſelf better by an example. When two armies take the field, the generals on both ſides

have their different plans, for the campaign, either of defence, or of offence: and as the former does not ſuſpend his meaſures till he is attacked, but takes them before-hand on every probable contingency, ſo the latter does not ſuſpend his till the opportunity of attacking preſents itſelf, but is alert, and conſtantly ready to ſeize it whenever it happens; and, in the mean time, is buſy to improve all the advantages of ſkill, of force, or of any other kind that he has, or that he can acquire, independently of the plan, and of the motions of his enemy.

In a word, my Lord, this is my notion, and I ſubmit it to you. According to the preſent form of our conſtitution, every member of either houſe of parliament is a member of a national ſtanding council, born, or appointed by the people, to promote good, and to oppoſe bad government; and if not veſted with the power of a miniſter of ſtate, yet veſted with the ſuperior power of controuling thoſe who are appointed ſuch by the crown. It follows from hence, that they who engage in oppoſition, are under as great obligations to prepare themſelves to controul, as they who ſerve the crown are under to prepare themſelves to carry on, the adminiſtration: and that a party, formed for this purpoſe, do not act like good citizens, nor honeſt men, unleſs they propoſe true, as well as oppoſe falſe meaſures of government. Sure I am, they do not act like wiſe men, unleſs they act ſyſtematically, and unleſs they contraſt, on every occaſion, that ſcheme of policy which the public intereſt requires to be followed, with that which is ſuited to no intereſt but the private intereſt of the prince, or his miniſters. Cunning men (ſeveral ſuch there are among you) will diſlike this conſequence, and object, that ſuch a conduct would ſupport, under the appearance of oppoſing, a weak, and even a wicked adminiſtration; and that to pro-

ceed in this manner, would be to give good counſel to a bad miniſter, and to extricate him out of diſtreſſes that ought to be improved to his ruin. But cunning pays no regard to virtue, and is but the low mimic of wiſdom. It were eaſy to demonſtrate what I have aſſerted concerning the duty of an oppoſing party: and I preſume there is no need of laboring to prove, that a party who oppoſed, ſyſtematically, a wiſe to a ſilly, an honeſt to an iniquitous, ſcheme of government, would acquire greater reputation and ſtrength, and arrive more ſurely at their end, than a party who oppoſed, occaſionally as it were, without any common ſyſtem, without any general concert, with little uniformity, little preparation, little perſeverance, and as little knowledge or political capacity. But it is time to leave this invidious ſubject, and to haſten to the concluſion of my letter before it grows into a book.

I am,

My Lord, &c.

THE IDEA OF A PATRIOT KING.

THE IDEA OF A PATRIOT KING.

INTRODUCTION.

Dec. 1. 1738.

REVISING ſome letters I writ to my Lord * * *, I found in one of them a great deal ſaid concerning the duties which men owe to their country, thoſe men particularly who live under a free conſtitution of government; with a ſtrong application of theſe general doctrines to the preſent ſtate of Great Britain, and to the characters of the preſent actors on this ſtage.

I SAW no reaſon to alter, none even to ſoften, any thing that is there advanced. On the contrary, it came into my mind to carry theſe conſiderations further, and to delineate, for I pretend not to make a perfect draught, the duties of a king to his country; of thoſe kings particularly who are appointed

by the people, for I know of none who are anointed by God to rule in limited monarchies. After which, I propoſed to apply the general doctrines in this caſe, as ſtrongly and as directly as in the other, to the preſent ſtate of Great Britain.

I AM not one of thoſe oriental ſlaves, who deem it unlawful preſumption to look their kings in the face; neither am I ſwayed by my Lord BACON's authority, to think this cuſtom good and reaſonable in its meaning, tho it favors of barbariſm in its inſtitution: Ritu quidem barbarus, ſed ſignificatione bonus. Much otherwiſe. It ſeems to me, that no ſecrets are ſo important to be known, no hearts deſerve to be pryed into with more curioſity and attention, than thoſe of princes. But many things have concurred, beſides age and temper, to ſet me at a great diſtance from the preſent court. Far from prying into the hearts, I ſcarce know the faces, of our royal family. I ſhall therefore decline all application to their characters, and all mention of any influence which their characters may have on their own fortune, or on that of this nation.

THE principles I have reaſoned upon in my letter to my Lord ***, and thoſe I ſhall reaſon upon here, are the ſame. They are laid in the ſame ſyſtem of human nature. They are drawn from that ſource from whence all the duties of public and private morality muſt be derived, or they will be often falſly, and always precarioufly, eſtabliſhed. Up to this ſource there are few men who take the pains to go: and, open as it lies, there are not many who can find their way to it. By ſuch as do, I ſhall be underſtood and approved: and, far from fearing the cenſure, or the ridicule, I ſhould reproach myſelf with the applauſe, of men who meaſure their intereſt by their paſſions, and their duty by the examples of a corrupt age; that is, by the examples they afford to one another.

Such, I think, are the greateſt part of the preſent generation; not of the vulgar alone, but of thoſe who ſtand foremoſt, and are raiſed higheſt in our nation. Such we may juſtly apprehend too that the next will be; ſince they who are to compoſe it will ſet out into the world under a direction that muſt incline them ſtrongly to the ſame courſe of ſelf-intereſt, profligacy, and corruption.

The iniquity of all the principal men in any community, of kings and miniſters eſpecially, does not conſiſt alone in the crimes they commit, and in the immediate conſequences of theſe crimes: and therefore their guilt is not to be meaſured by theſe alone. Such men ſin againſt poſterity, as well as againſt their own age: and when the conſequences of their crimes are over, the conſequences of their example remain. I think, and every wiſe and honeſt man in generations yet unborn will think, if the hiſtory of this adminiſtration deſcends to blacken our annals, that the greateſt iniquity of the miniſter, on whom the whole iniquity ought to be charged, ſince he has been ſo long in poſſeſſion of the whole power, is the conſtant endeavour he has employed to corrupt the morals of men. I ſay thus generally, the morals; becauſe he, who abandons or betrays his country, will abandon or betray his friend; and becauſe he, who is prevailed on to act in parliament without any regard to truth or juſtice, will eaſily prevail on himſelf to act in the ſame manner every where elſe. A wiſer and honeſter adminiſtration may relieve our trade from that oppreſſion, and the public from that load of debt, under which it muſt be ſuppoſed that he has induſtriouſly kept it; becauſe we are able to prove, by fair calculations, that he might have provided effectually for the payment of it, ſince he came to the head of the treaſury. A wiſer and honeſter adminiſtration may draw us back to our former credit and influence

fluence abroad, from that ſtate of contempt into which we are ſunk among all our neighbours. But will the minds of men, which this miniſter has narrowed to perſonal regards alone, will their views, which he has confined to the preſent moment, as if nations were mortal like the men who compoſe them, and Britain was to periſh with her degenerate children; will theſe, I ſay, be ſo eaſily or ſo ſoon enlarged? Will their ſentiments, which are debaſed from the love of liberty, from zeal for the honor and proſperity of their country, and from a deſire of honeſt fame, to an abſolute unconcernedneſs for all theſe, to an abject ſubmiſſion, and to a rapacious eagerneſs after wealth, that may ſate their avarice, and exceed the profuſion of their luxury; will theſe, I ſay again, be ſo eaſily, or ſo ſoon elevated? in a word, will the Britiſh ſpirit, that ſpirit which has preſerved liberty hitherto in one corner of the world at leaſt, be ſo eaſily or ſo ſoon reinfuſed into the Britiſh nation? I think not. We have been long coming to this point of depravation: and the progreſs from confirmed habits of evil is much more ſlow than the progreſs to them. Virtue is not placed on a rugged mountain of difficult and dangerous acceſs, as they who would excuſe the indolence of their temper, or the perverſeneſs of their will, deſire to have it believed; but ſhe is ſeated, however, on an eminence. We may go up to her with eaſe, but we muſt go up gradually, according to the natural progreſſion of reaſon, who is to lead the way, and to guide our ſteps. On the other hand, if we fall from thence, we are ſure to be hurried down the hill with a blind impetuoſity, according to the natural violence of thoſe appetites and paſſions that cauſed our fall at firſt, and urge it on the faſter, the further they are removed from the controul that before reſtrained them.

To perform, therefore, ſo great a work, as to reinfuſe the ſpirit of liberty, to reform the morals, and to raiſe the ſentiments of a people, much time is required; and a work which requires ſo much time, may, too probably, be never completed; conſidering how unſteadily and unſyſtematically even the beſt of men are apt often to proceed, and how this reformation is to be carried forward, in oppoſition to public faſhion, and private inclination, to the authority of the men in power, and to the ſecret bent of many of thoſe who are out of power. Let us not flatter ourſelves: I did ſo too long. It is more to be wiſhed than to be hoped, that the contagion ſhould ſpread no further than that leprous race, who carry on their ſkins, expoſed to public ſight, the ſcabs and blotches of their diſtemper. The miniſter preaches corruption aloud and conſtantly, like an impudent miſſionary of vice: and ſome there are who not only inſinuate, but teach the ſame occaſionally. I ſay, ſome; becauſe I am as far from thinking, that all thoſe who join with him, as that any of thoſe who oppoſe him, wait only to be more authorized, that they may propagate it with greater ſucceſs, and apply it to their own uſe, in their turn.

It ſeems to me, upon the whole matter, that to ſave or redeem a nation, under ſuch circumſtances, from perdition, nothing leſs is neceſſary than ſome great, ſome extraordinary conjuncture of ill fortune, or of good, which may purge, yet ſo as by fire. Diſtreſs from abroad, bankruptcy at home, and other circumſtances of like nature and tendency, may beget univerſal confuſion. Out of confuſion order may ariſe: but it may be the order of a wicked tyranny, inſtead of the order of a juſt monarchy. Either may happen: and ſuch an alternative, at the diſpoſition of fortune, is ſufficient to make a Stoic tremble! We may be ſaved, indeed, by means of a very different

ferent kind ; but theſe means will not offer themſelves, this way of ſalvation will not be opened to us, without the concurrence, and the influence, of a PATRIOT KING, the moſt uncommon of all phænomena in the phyſical or moral world.

NOTHING can ſo ſurely and ſo effectually reſtore the virtue and public ſpirit eſſential to the preſervation of liberty and national proſperity, as the reign of ſuch a prince.

WE are willing to indulge this pleaſing expectation, and there is nothing we deſire more ardently than to be able to hold of a Britiſh prince, without flattery, the ſame language that was held of a Roman emperor, with a great deal,

Nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes.

But let us not neglect, on our part, ſuch means as are in our power, to keep the cauſe of truth, of reaſon, of virtue, and of liberty, alive. If the bleſſing be with-held from us, let us deſerve, at leaſt, that it ſhould be granted to us. If heaven, in mercy, beſtows it on us, let us prepare to receive it, to improve it, and to co-operate with it.

I SPEAK as if I could take my ſhare in theſe glorious efforts. Neither ſhall I recal my words. Stripped of the rights of a Britiſh ſubject, of all except the meaneſt of them, that of inheriting, I remember that I am a Briton ſtill. I apply to myſelf what I have read in SENECA, Officia ſi civis amiſerit, hominis exerceat. I have renounced the world, not in ſhew, but in reality, and more by my way of thinking, than by my way of living, as retired as that may ſeem. But I have not renounced my country, nor my friends : and by my friends I mean all thoſe, and thoſe alone, who are ſuch to their country, by whatever name they have

have been, or may be ſtill diſtinguiſhed; and tho in that number there ſhould be men, of whoſe paſt ingratitude, injuſtice, or malice, I might complain, on my own account, with the greateſt reaſon. Theſe I will never renounce. In their proſperity, they ſhall never hear of me: in their diſtreſs, always. In that retreat, wherein the remainder of my days ſhall be ſpent, I may be of ſome uſe to them; ſince, even from thence, I may adviſe, exhort, and warn them. "Nec "enim is ſolus reipublicae prodeſt, qui candidatos extrahit, "et tuetur reos, et de pace, belloque cenſet; ſed qui juven- "tutem exhortatur, qui, in tanta bonorum praeceptorum "inopia, virtute inſtruit animos; qui ad pecuniam luxuriam- "que curſu ruentes, prenſat ac retrahit, et, ſi nihil aliud, "certe moratur; in privato publicum negotium agit."

THE IDEA OF A PATRIOT KING.

MY intention is not to introduce what I have to ſay concerning the duties of kings, by any nice inquiry into the original of their inſtitution. What is to be known of it will appear plainly enough, to ſuch as are able and can ſpare time to trace it, in the broken traditions which are come down to us of a few nations. But thoſe, who are not able to trace it there, may trace ſomething better, and more worthy to be known, in their own thoughts: I mean what this inſtitution ought to have been, whenever it began, according to the rule of reaſon, founded in the common rights, and intereſts, of mankind. On this head it is quite neceſſary to make ſome reflections, that will, like angular ſtones laid on a rock, ſupport the little fabric, the model however of a great building, that I propoſe to raiſe.

So plain a matter could never have been rendered intricate and voluminous, had it not been for lawleſs ambition, extravagant vanity, and the deteſtable ſpirit of tyranny, abetted by the private intereſts of artful men, by adulation

and ſuperſtition, two vices to which that ſtaring timid creature man is exceſſively prone; if authority had not impoſed on ſuch as did not pretend to reaſon; and if ſuch as did attempt to reaſon had not been caught in the common ſnares of ſophiſm, and bewildered in the labyrinths of diſputation. In this caſe, therefore, as in all thoſe of great concernment, the ſhorteſt and the ſureſt method of arriving at real knowledge is to unlearn the leſſons we have been taught, to remount to firſt principles, and take no body's word about them; for it is about them that almoſt all the juggling and legerdemain, employed by men whoſe trade it is to deceive, are ſet to work.

Now he, who does ſo in this caſe, will diſcover ſoon, that the notions concerning the divine inſtitution and right of kings, as well as the abſolute power belonging to their office, have no foundation in fact or reaſon, but have riſen from an old alliance between eccleſiaſtical and civil policy. The characters of king and prieſt have been ſometimes blended together: and when they have been divided, as kings have found the great effects wrought in government by the empire which prieſts obtain over the conſciences of mankind, ſo prieſts have been taught by experience, that the beſt method to preſerve their own rank, dignity, wealth, and power, all raiſed upon a ſuppoſed divine right, is to communicate the ſame pretenſion to kings, and, by a fallacy common to both, impoſe their uſurpations on a ſilly world. This they have done: and, in the ſtate, as in the church, theſe pretenſions to a divine right have been generally carried higheſt by thoſe, who have had the leaſt pretenſion to the divine favor.

It is worth while to obſerve, on what principle ſome men were advanced to a great pre-eminence over others, in the

early ages of thoſe nations that are a little known to us: I ſpeak not of ſuch as raiſed themſelves by conqueſt, but of ſuch as were raiſed by common conſent. Now you will find, in all theſe proceedings, an entire uniformity of principle. The authors of ſuch inventions, as were of general uſe to the well-being of mankind, were not only reverenced and obeyed during their lives, but worſhipped after their deaths: they became principal Gods, "Dii majorum gentium." The founders of common-wealths, the law-givers, and the heroes of particular ſtates, became Gods of a ſecond claſs, "Dii "minorum gentium." All pre-eminence was given in heaven, as well as in earth, in proportion to the benefits that men received. Majeſty was the firſt, and divinity the ſecond, reward. Both were earned by ſervices done to mankind, whom it was eaſy to lead, in thoſe days of ſimplicity and ſuperſtition, from admiration and gratitude, to adoration and expectation.

When advantage had been taken, by ſome particular men, of theſe diſpoſitions in the generality, and religion and government were become two trades or myſteries, new means of attaining to this pre-eminence were ſoon deviſed, and new and even contrary motives worked the ſame effect. Merit had given rank; but rank was ſoon kept, and, which is more prepoſterous, obtained too, without merit. Men were then made kings for reaſons as little relative to good government, as the neighing of the horſe of the ſon of Hystaspes.

But the moſt prevalent, and the general motive was proximity of blood to the laſt, not to the beſt, king. Nobility in China mounts upwards: and he, who has it conferred upon him, enobles his anceſtors, not his poſterity. A wiſe inſtitution! and eſpecially among a people in whoſe minds a great veneration

veneration for their forefathers has been always carefully maintained. But in China, as well as in moſt other countries, royalty has deſcended, and kingdoms have been reckoned the patrimonies of particular families.

I HAVE read in one of the hiſtorians of the latter Roman empire, hiſtorians, by the way, whom I will not adviſe others to miſpend their time in reading, that SAPORES, the famous king of Perſia againſt whom JULIAN made the expedition wherein he loſt his life, was crowned in his mother's womb. His father left her with child: the magi declared that the child would be a male; whereupon the royal enſigns were brought forth, they were placed on her majeſty's belly, and the princes and the ſatrapes proſtrate recogniſed the embryo-monarch. But to take a more known example, out of multitudes that preſent themſelves; DOMITIAN, the worſt, and TRAJAN, the beſt of princes, were promoted to the empire by the ſame title. DOMITIAN was the ſon of FLAVIUS, and the brother, tho poſſibly the poiſoner too, of TITUS VESPASIAN: TRAJAN was the adopted ſon of NERVA. Hereditary right ſerved the purpoſe of one, as well as of the other: and if TRAJAN was tranſlated to a place among the gods, this was no greater a diſtinction than ſome of the worſt of his predeceſſors obtained, for reaſons generally as good as that which SENECA puts into the mouth of DIESPITER in the Apokolokyntoſis of CLAUDIUS; "cum ſit e republica eſſe aliquem, "qui cum Romulo poſſit ferventia rapa vorare." To ſay the truth, it would have been a wiſer meaſure to have made theſe royal perſons gods at once: as gods they would have done neither good nor hurt; but as emperors, in their way to divinity, they acted like devils.

If my readers are ready by this time to think me antimonarchial, and in particular an enemy to the ſucceſſion of kings by hereditary right, I hope to be ſoon reſtored to their good opinion. I eſteem monarchy above any other form of government, and hereditary monarchy above elective. I reverence kings, their office, their rights, their perſons: and it will never be owing to the principles I am going to eſtabliſh, becauſe the character and government of a Patriot King can be eſtabliſhed on no other, if their office and their right are not always held divine, and their perſons always ſacred.

Now, we are ſubject, by the conſtitution of human nature, and therefore by the will of the Author of this and every other nature, to two laws. One given immediately to all men by God, the ſame to all, and obligatory alike on all. The other given to man by man; and therefore not the ſame to all, nor obligatory alike on all: founded indeed on the ſame principles, but varied by different applications of them to times, to characters, and to a number, which may be reckoned infinite, of other circumſtances. By the firſt, I mean the univerſal law of reaſon; and by the ſecond, the particular law, or conſtitution of laws, by which every diſtinct community has choſen to be governed.

The obligation, of ſubmiſſion to both, is diſcoverable by ſo clear and ſo ſimple an uſe of our intellectual faculties, that it may be ſaid properly enough to be revealed to us by God: and tho both theſe laws cannot be ſaid properly to be given by him, yet our obligation to ſubmit to the civil law is a principal paragraph in the natural law, which he has moſt manifeſtly given us. In truth we can no more doubt of the obligations of both theſe laws, than of the exiſtence of the lawgiver. As ſu-

preme Lord over all his works, his general providence regards immediately the great common-wealth of mankind ; but then, as ſupreme Lord likewiſe, his authority gives a ſanction to the particular bodies of law which are made under it. The law of nature is the law of all his ſubjects: the conſtitutions of particular governments are like the by-laws of cities, or the appropriated cuſtoms of provinces. It follows, therefore, that he who breaks the laws of his country reſiſts the ordinance of God, that is, the law of his nature. God has inſtituted neither monarchy, nor ariſtocracy, nor democracy, nor mixed government: but tho God has inſtituted no particular form of government among men, yet by the general laws of his kingdom he exacts our obedience to the laws of thoſe communities, to which each of us is attached by birth, or to which we may be attached by a ſubſequent and lawful engagement.

From ſuch plain, unrefined, and therefore, I ſuppoſe, true reaſoning, the juſt authority of kings, and the due obedience of ſubjects, may be deduced with the utmoſt certainty. And ſurely it is far better for kings themſelves to have their authority thus founded on principles inconteſtable, and on fair deductions from them, than on the chimeras of madmen, or, what has been more common, the ſophiſms of knaves. A human right, that cannot be controverted, is preferable, ſurely, to a pretended divine right, which every man muſt believe implicitely, as few will do, or not believe at all.

But the principles we have laid down do not ſtop here. A divine right in kings is to be deduced evidently from them: a divine right to govern well, and conformably to the conſtitution at the head of which they are placed. A divine right to govern ill, is an abſurdity: to aſſert it, is blaſphemy. A people may chooſe, or hereditary ſucceſſion may raiſe, a bad prince

prince to the throne; but a good king alone can derive his right to govern from God. The reaſon is plain: good government alone can be in the divine intention. God has made us to deſire happineſs; he has made our happineſs dependent on ſociety; and the happineſs of ſociety dependent on good or bad government. His intention, therefore, was, that government ſhould be good.

This is eſſential to his wiſdom; for wiſdom conſiſts, ſurely, in proportioning means to ends: therefore it cannot be ſaid without abſurd impiety, that he confers a right to oppoſe his intention.

The office of kings is, then, of right divine, and their perſons are to be reputed ſacred. As men, they have no ſuch right, no ſuch ſacredneſs belonging to them: as kings, they have both, unleſs they forfeit them. Reverence for government obliges to reverence governors, who, for the ſake of it, are raiſed above the level of other men: but reverence for governors, independently of government, any further than reverence would be due to their virtues if they were private men, is prepoſterous, and repugnant to common ſenſe. The ſpring from which this legal reverence, for ſo I may call it, ariſes, is national, not perſonal. As well might we ſay that a ſhip is built, and loaded, and manned, for the ſake of any particular pilot, inſtead of acknowledging that the pilot is made for the ſake of the ſhip, her lading, and her crew, who are always the owners in the political veſſel; as to ſay that kingdoms were inſtituted for kings, not kings for kingdoms. In ſhort, and to carry our alluſion higher, majeſty is not an inherent, but a reflected light.

All this is as true of hereditary, as it is of elective monarchy; tho the ſcriblers for tyranny, under the name of mo-

narchy, would have us believe that there is ſomething more auguſt, and more ſacred in one than the other. They are ſacred alike, and this attribute is to be aſcribed or not aſcribed, to them, as they anſwer, or do not anſwer, the ends of their inſtitution. But there is another compariſon to be made, in which a great and moſt important diſſimilitude will be found between hereditary and elective monarchy. Nothing can be more abſurd, in pure ſpeculation, than an hereditary right in any mortal to govern other men: and yet, in practice, nothing can be more abſurd than to have a king to chuſe at every vacancy of a throne. We draw at a lottery indeed in one caſe, where there are many chances to loſe, and few to gain. But have we much more advantage of this kind in the other? I think not. Upon theſe, and upon moſt occaſions, the multitude would do at leaſt as well to truſt to chance as choice, and to their fortune as to their judgment. But in another reſpect, the advantage is entirely on the ſide of hereditary ſucceſſion; for, in elective monarchies, theſe elections, whether well or ill made, are often attended with ſuch national calamities, that even the beſt reigns cannot make amends for them: whereas, in hereditary monarchy, whether a good or a bad prince ſucceeds, theſe calamities are avoided. There is one ſource of evil the leſs open: and one ſource of evil the leſs in human affairs, where there are ſo many, is ſufficient to decide. We may lament the imperfections of our human ſtate, which is ſuch, that in caſes of the utmoſt importance to the order and good government of ſociety, and by conſequence to the happineſs of our kind, we are reduced, by the very conſtitution of our nature, to have no part to take that our reaſon can approve abſolutely. But tho we lament it, we muſt ſubmit to it. We muſt tell ourſelves once for all, that perfect ſchemes are not adapted to our imperfect ſtate; that Stoical morals and Platonic politics are nothing better than amuſements for thoſe who have had little experience in the affairs

affairs of the world, and who have much leiſure, " verba otio- " ſorum ſenum ad imperitos juvenes ;" which was the cenſure, and a juſt one too, that DIONYSIUS paſt on ſome of the doctrines of the father of the academy. In truth, all that human prudence can do, is to furniſh expedients, and to compound, as it were, with general vice and folly ; employing reaſon to act even againſt her own principles, and teaching us, if I may ſay ſo, " inſanire cum ratione," which appears on many occaſions not to be the paradox it has been thought.

To conclude this head therefore : as I think a limited monarchy the beſt of governments, ſo I think an hereditary monarchy the beſt of monarchies. I ſaid a limited monarchy ; for an unlimited monarchy, wherein arbitrary will, which is in truth no rule, is however the ſole rule, or ſtands inſtead of all rule of government, muſt be allowed ſo great an abſurdity, both in reaſon informed and uninformed by experience, that it ſeems a government fitter for ſavages than for civilized people.

BUT I think it proper to explain a little more what I mean, when I ſay a limited monarchy, that I may leave nothing untouched which ought to be taken into conſideration by us, when we attempt to fix our ideas of a PATRIOT KING.

AMONG many reaſons which determine me to prefer monarchy to every other form of government, this is a principal one. When monarchy is the eſſential form, it may be more eaſily and more uſefully tempered with ariſtocracy or democracy, or both, than either of them, when they are the eſſential forms, can be tempered with monarchy. It ſeems to me, that the introduction of a real permanent monarchical power, or any thing more than the pageantry of it, into either of

theſe, muſt deſtroy them and extinguiſh them, as a greater light extinguiſhes a leſs. Whereas it may eaſily be ſhewn, and the true form of our government will demonſtrate, without ſeeking any other example, that very conſiderable ariſtocratical and democratical powers may be grafted on a monarchical ſtock, without diminiſhing the luſtre, or reſtraining the power and authority of the prince, enough to alter in any degree the eſſential form.

A GREAT difference is made in nature, and therefore the diſtinction ſhould be always preſerved in our notions, between two things that we are apt to confound in ſpeculation, as they have been confounded in practice, legiſlative and monarchical power. There muſt be an abſolute, unlimited, and uncontroulable power lodged ſomewhere in every government; but to conſtitute monarchy, or the government of a ſingle perſon, it is not neceſſary that this power ſhould be lodged in the monarch alone. It is no more neceſſary that he ſhould excluſively and independently eſtabliſh the rule of his government, than it is, that he ſhould govern without any rule at all: and this ſurely will be thought reaſonable by no man.

I WOULD not ſay God governs by a rule that we know, or may know, as well as he, and upon our knowledge of which he appeals to men for the juſtice of his proceedings towards them; which a famous divine has impiouſly advanced, in a pretended demonſtration of his being and attributes. God forbid! But this I may ſay, that God does always that which is fitteſt to be done, and that this fitneſs, whereof neither that preſumptuous dogmatiſt was, nor any created being is, a competent judge, reſults from the various natures, and more various relations of things: ſo that, as creator of all ſyſtems by which theſe natures and relations are conſtituted, he preſcribed

ſcribed to himſelf the rule, which he follows as governor of of every ſyſtem of being. In ſhort, with reverence be it ſpoken, God is a monarch, yet not an arbitrary but a limited monarch, limited by the rule which infinite wiſdom preſcribes to infinite power. I know well enough the impropriety of theſe expreſſions; but, when our ideas are inadequate, our expreſſions muſt needs be improper. Such conceptions, however, as we are able to form of theſe attributes, and of the exerciſe of them in the government of the univerſe, may ſerve to ſhew what I have produced them to ſhew. If governing without any rule, and by arbitrary will, be not eſſential to our idea of the monarchy of the Supreme Being, it is plainly ridiculous to ſuppoſe them neceſſarily included in the idea of a human monarchy: and tho God, in his eternal ideas, for we are able to conceive no other manner of knowing, has preſcribed to himſelf that rule by which he governs the univerſe he created, it will be juſt as ridiculous to affirm, that the idea of human monarchy cannot be preſerved, if kings are obliged to govern according to a rule eſtabliſhed by the wiſdom of a ſtate, that was a ſtate before they were kings, and by the conſent of a people that they did not moſt certainly create; eſpecially when the whole executive power is excluſively in their hands, and the legiſlative power cannot be exerciſed without their concurrence.

THERE are limitations indeed that would deſtroy the eſſential form of monarchy: or, in other words, a monarchical conſtitution may be changed, under pretence of limiting the monarch. This happened among us in the laſt century, when the vileſt uſurpation, and the moſt infamous tyranny, were eſtabliſhed over our nation, by ſome of the worſt and ſome of the meaneſt men in it. I will not ſay, that the eſſential form of monarchy ſhould be preſerved tho the

the preſervation of it were to cauſe the loſs of liberty. "Salus "reipublicae ſuprema lex eſto," is a fundamental law: and, ſure I am, the ſafety of a commonwealth is ill provided for, if the liberty be given up. But this I preſume to ſay, and can demonſtrate, that all the limitations neceſſary to preſerve liberty, as long as the ſpirit of it ſubſiſts, and longer than that no limitations of monarchy, nor any other form of government, can preſerve it, are compatible with monarchy. I think on theſe ſubjects, neither as the Tories, nor as the Whigs have thought: at leaſt I endeavour to avoid the exceſſes of both. I neither dreſs up kings like ſo many burleſque Jupiters, weighing the fortunes of mankind in the ſcales of fate, and darting thunderbolts at the heads of rebellious giants: nor do I ſtrip them naked, as it were, and leave them at moſt a few tattered rags to clothe their majeſty, but ſuch as can ſerve really as little for uſe as for ornament. My aim is to fix this principle; that limitations on a crown ought to be carried as far as it is neceſſary to ſecure the liberties of a people; and that all ſuch limitations may ſubſiſt, without weakening or endangering monarchy.

I SHALL be told perhaps, for I have heard it ſaid by many, that this point is imaginary; and that limitations, ſufficient to procure good government and to ſecure liberty under a bad prince, cannot be made, unleſs they are ſuch as will deprive the ſubjects of many benefits in the reign of a good prince, clog his adminiſtration, maintain an unjuſt jealouſy between him and his people, and occaſion a defect of power, neceſſary to preſerve the public tranquillity, and to promote the national proſperity. If this was true, here would be a much more melancholy inſtance of the imperfection of our nature, and of the inefficacy of our reaſon to ſupply this imperfection, than the former. In the former, reaſon prompted

by experience avoids a certain evil effectually, and is able to provide, in ſome meaſure, againſt the contingent evils that may ariſe from the expedient itſelf. But in the latter, if what is there advanced was true, theſe proviſions againſt contingent evils would, in ſome caſes, be the occaſions of much certain evil, and of poſitive good in none: under a good prince they would render the adminiſtration defective, and under a bad one there would be no government at all. But the truth is widely different from this repreſentation. The limitations neceſſary to preſerve liberty under monarchy will reſtrain effectually a bad prince, without being ever felt as ſhackles by a good one. Our conſtitution is brought, or almoſt brought, to ſuch a point, a point of perfection I think it, that no king, who is not, in the true meaning of the word, a patriot, can govern Britain with eaſe, ſecurity, honor, dignity, or indeed with ſufficient power and ſtrength. But yet a king, who is a patriot, may govern with all the former; and, beſides them, with power as extended as the moſt abſolute monarch can boaſt, and a power, too, far more agreeable in the enjoyment, as well as more effectual in the operation.

To attain theſe great and noble ends, the patriotiſm muſt be real, and not in ſhew alone. It is ſomething to deſire to appear a patriot: and the deſire of having fame is a ſtep towards deſerving it, becauſe it is a motive the more to deſerve it. If it be true, as TACITUS ſays, "contemptu famae contemni "virtutem," that a contempt of a good name, or an indifference about it, begets or accompanies always a contempt of virtue; the contrary will be true: and they are certainly both true. But this motive alone is not ſufficient. To conſtitute a patriot, whether king or ſubject, there muſt be ſomething more ſubſtantial than a deſire of fame, in the compoſition; and if there be not, this deſire of fame will never riſe above that

ſentiment

ſentiment which may be compared to the coquetry of women; a fondneſs of tranſient applauſe, which is courted by vanity, given by flattery, and ſpends itſelf in ſhew, like the qualities which acquire it. Patriotiſm muſt be founded in great principles, and ſupported by great virtues. The chief of theſe principles I have endeavoured to trace; and I will not ſcruple to aſſert, that a man can be a good king upon no other. He may, without them and by complexion, be unambitious, generous, good-natured; but, without them, the exerciſe even of theſe virtues will be often ill directed: and, with principles of another ſort, he will be drawn eaſily, notwithſtanding theſe virtues, from all the purpoſes of his inſtitution.

I MENTION theſe oppoſite principles the rather, becauſe, inſtead of wondering that ſo many kings, unfit and unworthy to be truſted with the government of mankind, appear in the world, I have been tempted to wonder that there are any tolerable; when I have conſidered the flattery that environs them moſt commonly from the cradle, and the tendency of all thoſe falſe notions that are inſtilled into them by precept, and by example, by the habits of courts, and by the intereſted ſelfiſh views of courtiers. They are bred to eſteem themſelves of a diſtinct and ſuperior ſpecies among men, as men are among animals.

LEWIS the fourteenth was a ſtrong inſtance of the effect of this education, which trains up kings to be tyrants, without knowing that they are ſo. That oppreſſion under which he kept his people, during the whole courſe of a long reign, might proceed, in ſome degree, from the natural haughtineſs of his temper; but it proceeded, in a greater degree, from the principles and habits of his education. By this he

had been brought to look on his kingdom as a patrimony that deſcended to him from his anceſtors, and that was to be conſidered in no other light: ſo that when a very conſiderable man had diſcourſed to him at large of the miſerable condition, to which his people was reduced, and had frequently uſed this word, "l'état;" tho the king approved the ſubſtance of all he had ſaid, yet he was ſhocked at the frequent repetition of this word, and complained of it as of a kind of indecency to himſelf. This will not appear ſo ſtrange to our ſecond, as it may very juſtly to our firſt reflections; for what wonder is it, that princes are eaſily betrayed into an error that takes its riſe in the general imperfection of our nature, in our pride, our vanity, and our preſumption? the baſtard children, but the children ſtill, of ſelf-love; a ſpurious brood, but often a favorite brood, that governs the whole family. As men are apt to make themſelves the meaſure of all being, ſo they make themſelves the final cauſe of all creation. Thus the reputed orthodox philoſophers in all ages have taught, that the world was made for man, the earth for him to inhabit, and all the luminous bodies, in the immenſe expanſe around us, for him to gaze at. Kings do no more, no not ſo much, when they imagine themſelves the final cauſe for which ſocieties were formed, and governments inſtituted.

This capital error, in which almoſt every prince is confirmed by his education, has ſo great extent and ſo general influence, that a right to do every iniquitous thing in government may be derived from it. But, as if this was not enough, the characters of princes are ſpoiled many more ways by their education. I ſhall not deſcend into a detail of ſuch particulars, nor preſume ſo much as to hint what regulations might be made about the education of princes, nor what part our parliaments might take occaſionally in this momentous affair,

leſt I ſhould appear too refining, or too preſumptuous, in my ſpeculations. But I may aſſert in general, that the indifference of mankind upon this head, eſpecially in a government conſtituted like ours, is monſtrous.

I MAY alſo take notice of another cauſe of the miſtakes of princes, I mean the general conduct of thoſe who are brought near to their perſons. Such men, let me ſay, have a particular duty ariſing from this very ſituation; a duty common to them all, becauſe it ariſes not from their ſtations, which are different, but from their ſituation, which is the ſame. To enumerate the various applications of this duty would be too minute and tedious; but this may ſuffice, that all ſuch men ſhould bear conſtantly in mind, that the maſter they ſerve is, or is to be the king of their country: that their attachment to him, therefore, is not to be like that of other ſervants to other maſters, for his ſake alone, or for his ſake and their own, but for the ſake of their country likewiſe.

CRATERUS loves the king, but HEPHESTION loves ALEXANDER, was a ſaying of the laſt that has been often quoted, but not cenſured as it ought to be. ALEXANDER gave the preference to the attachment of HEPHESTION; but this preference was due undoubtedly to that of CRATERUS. Attachment to a private perſon muſt comprehend a great concern for his character and his intereſts: but attachment to one who is, or may be a king, much more; becauſe the character of the latter is more important to himſelf and others; and becauſe his intereſts are vaſtly more complicated with thoſe of his country, and in ſome ſort with thoſe of mankind. ALEXANDER himſelf ſeemed, upon one occaſion, to make the diſtinction that ſhould be always made between our attachments to a prince, and to any private perſon. It was when

PARMENIO

PARMENIO adviſed him to accept the terms of peace which DARIUS offered: they were great, he thought them ſo; but he thought, no matter for my purpoſe whether juſtly or not, that it would be unbecoming him to accept them; therefore he rejected them, but acknowledged, that "he would "have done as he was adviſed to do, if he had been PAR-"MENIO."

As to perſons who are not about a prince in the ſituation here ſpoken of, they can do little more than proportion their applauſe, and the demonſtrations of their confidence and affection, to the benefits they actually receive from the prince on the throne, or to the juſt expectations that a ſucceſſor gives them. It is of the latter I propoſe to ſpeak here particularly. If he gives them thoſe of a good reign, we may aſſure ourſelves that they will carry, and in this caſe they ought to carry that applauſe, and thoſe demonſtrations of their confidence and affection, as high as ſuch a prince himſelf can deſire. Thus the prince and the people take, in effect, a ſort of engagement with one another; the prince to govern well, and the people to honor and obey him. If he gives them expectations of a bad reign, they have this obligation to him at leaſt, that he puts them early on their guard; and an obligation, and an advantage it will be, if they prepare for his acceſſion as for a great and inevitable evil; and if they guard on every occaſion againſt the ill uſe, they foreſee, that he will make of money and power. Above all, they ſhould not ſuffer themſelves to be caught in the common ſnare, which is laid under ſpecious pretences of "gaining ſuch a "prince, and of keeping him by public compliances out of "bad hands." That argument has been preſſed more than once, has prevailed, and has been fruitful of moſt pernicious conſequences. None indeed can be more abſurd. It is not

unlike the reaſoning of thoſe ſavages who worſhip the devil, not becauſe they love him or honor him, or expect any good from him, but that he may do them no hurt. Nay, it is more abſurd; for the ſavages ſuppoſe that the devil has, independently of them, the power to hurt them: whereas the others put more power into the hands of a prince, becauſe he has already ſome power to hurt them; and truſt to the juſtice and gratitude of one, who wants ſenſe, virtue, or both, rather than increaſe and fortify the barriers againſt his folly and his vices.

But the truth is, that men, who reaſon and act in this manner, either mean, or elſe are led by ſuch as mean, nothing more than to make a private court at the public expence; who chuſe to be the inſtruments of a bad king rather than to be out of power; and who are often ſo wicked, that they would prefer ſuch a ſervice to that of the beſt of kings. In fine, theſe reaſons, and every other reaſon for providing againſt a bad reign in proſpect, acquire a new force, when one weak or wicked prince is, in the order of ſucceſſion, to follow another of the ſame character. Such proviſions indeed are hardeſt to be obtained when they are the moſt neceſſary; that is, when the ſpirit of liberty begins to flag in a free people, and when they become diſpoſed, by habits that have grown inſenſibly upon them, to a baſe ſubmiſſion. But they are neceſſary too, even when they are eaſieſt to be obtained; that is, when the ſpirit of liberty is in full ſtrength, and a diſpoſition to oppoſe all inſtances of male-adminiſtration, and to reſiſt all attempts on liberty, is univerſal. In both caſes, the endeavors of every man who loves his country will be employed with inceſſant care and conſtancy to obtain them, that good government and liberty may be the better preſerved and ſecured; but in the latter caſe for this further

further reaſon alſo, that the preſervation and ſecurity of theſe may be provided for, not only better, but more conſiſtently with public tranquillity, by conſtitutional methods, and a legal courſe of oppoſition to the exceſſes of regal or miniſterial power. What I touch upon here might be made extremely plain; and I think the obſervation would appear to be of no ſmall importance: but I ſhould be carried too far from my ſubject, and my ſubject will afford me matter of more agreeable ſpeculation.

It is true that a prince, who gives juſt reaſons to expect that his reign will be that of a Patriot King, may not always meet, and from all perſons, ſuch returns as ſuch expectations deſerve: but they muſt not hinder either the prince from continuing to give them, or the people from continuing to acknowledge them. United, none can hurt them: and if no artifice interrupts, no power can defeat, the effects of their perſeverance. It will blaſt many a wicked project, keep virtue in countenance, and vice, to ſome degree at leaſt, in awe. Nay, if it ſhould fail to have theſe effects, if we ſhould even ſuppoſe a good prince to ſuffer with the people, and in ſome meaſure for them, yet many advantages would accrue to him: for inſtance, the cauſe of the people he is to govern, and his own cauſe would be made the ſame by their common enemies. He would feel grievances himſelf as a ſubject, before he had the power of impoſing them as a king. He would be formed in that ſchool out of which the greateſt and the beſt of monarchs have come, the ſchool of affliction: and all the vices, which had prevailed before his reign, would ſerve as ſo many foils to the glories of it. But I haſten to ſpeak of the greateſt of all theſe advantages, and of that which a Patriot King will eſteem to be ſuch; whoſe ways of thinking and acting to ſo glorious a purpoſe as

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the re-eſtabliſhment of a free conſtitution, when it has been ſhook by the iniquity of former adminiſtrations, I ſhall endeavour to explain.

What I have here ſaid will paſs among ſome for the reveries of a diſtempered brain, at beſt for the vain ſpeculations of an idle man who has loſt ſight of the world, or who had never ſagacity enough to diſcern in government the practicable from the impracticable. Will it not be ſaid, that this is adviſing a king to rouze a ſpirit which may turn againſt himſelf; to reject the ſole expedient of governing a limited monarchy with ſucceſs; to labor to confine, inſtead of laboring to extend, his power: to patch up an old conſtitution, which his people are diſpoſed to lay aſide, inſtead of forming a new one more agreeable to them, and more advantageous to him; to refuſe, in ſhort, to be an abſolute monarch, when every circumſtance invites him to it? All theſe particulars, in every one of which the queſtion is begged, will be thus repreſented, and will be then ridiculed as paradoxes fit to be ranked among the "mirabilia et "inopinata" of the Stoics, and ſuch as no man in his ſenſes can maintain in earneſt. Theſe judgments and theſe reaſonings may be expected in an age as futile and as corrupt as ours: in an age wherein ſo many betray the cauſe of liberty, and act not only without regard, but in direct oppoſition, to the moſt important intereſts of their country; not only occaſionally, by ſurpriſe, by weakneſs, by ſtrong temptation, or ſly ſeduction, but conſtantly, ſteadily, by deliberate choice, and in purſuance of principles they avow and propagate: in an age when ſo many others ſhrink from the ſervice of their country, or promote it cooly and uncertainly, in ſubordination to their own intereſt and humor, or to thoſe of a party: in an age, when to aſſert the truth is called ſpreading of de-

luſion, and to aſſert the cauſe of liberty and good government, is termed ſowing of ſedition. But I have declared already my unconcernedneſs at the cenſure or ridicule of ſuch men as theſe; for whoſe ſuppoſed abilities I have much well-grounded contempt, and againſt whoſe real immorality I have as juſt indignation.

Let us come, therefore, to the bar of reaſon and experience, where we ſhall find theſe paradoxes admitted as plain and almoſt ſelf-evident propoſitions, and theſe reveries and vain ſpeculations as important truths, confirmed by experience in all ages and all countries.

Machiavel is an author who ſhould have great authority with the perſons likely to oppoſe me. He propoſes to princes the amplification of their power, the extent of their dominion, and the ſubjection of their people, as the ſole objects of their policy. He deviſes and recommends all means that tend to theſe purpoſes, without the conſideration of any duty owing to God or man, or any regard to the morality or immorality of actions. Yet even he declares the affectation of virtue to be uſeful to princes: he is ſo far on my ſide in the preſent queſtion. The only difference between us is, I would have the virtue real: he requires no more than the appearance of it.

In the tenth chapter of the firſt book of Diſcourſes, he appears convinced, ſuch is the force of truth, but how conſiſtently with himſelf let others determine, that the ſupreme glory of a prince accrues to him who eſtabliſhes good government and a free conſtitution; and that a prince, ambitious of fame, muſt wiſh to come into poſſeſſion of a diſordered and corrupted ſtate, not to finiſh the wicked work that others have begun, and to complete the ruin, but to ſtop the

the progreſs of the firſt, and to prevent the laſt. He thinks this not only the true way to fame, but to ſecurity and quiet; as the contrary leads, for here is no third way, and a prince muſt make his option between theſe two, not only to infamy, but to danger and to perpetual diſquietude. He repreſents thoſe who might eſtabliſh a commonwealth or a legal monarchy, and who chuſe to improve the opportunity of eſtabliſhing tyranny, that is, monarchy without any rule of law, as men who are deceived by falſe notions of good, and falſe appearances of glory, and who are in effect blind to their true intereſt in every reſpect: "ne ſi auvegono per queſto partito "quanta fama, quanta gloria, quanto honore, ſicurta, quiete, "con ſatisfatione d'animo è fuggono, et in quanta infamia, "vituperio, biaſimo, pericolo & inquietudine incorrono." He touches another advantage which patriot princes reap: and in that he contradicts flatly the main point on which his half-taught ſcholars inſiſt. He denies that ſuch princes diminiſh their power by circumſcribing it: and affirms, with truth on his ſide, that TIMOLEON, and others of the ſame character whom he had cited, poſſeſſed as great authority in their country, with every other advantage beſides, as DIONYSIUS or PHALARIS had acquired, with the loſs of all thoſe advantages. Thus far MACHIAVEL reaſons juſtly; but he takes in only a part of his ſubject, and confines himſelf to thoſe motives that ſhould determine a wiſe prince to maintain liberty, becauſe it is his intereſt to do ſo. He riſes no higher than the conſideration of mere intereſt, of fame, of ſecurity, of quiet, and of power, all perſonal to the prince: and by ſuch motives alone even his favorite BORGIA might have been determined to affect the virtues of a patriot prince; more than which this great doctor in political knowledge would not have required of him. But he is far from going up to that motive which ſhould above all determine a good

prince to hold this conduct, becauſe it is his duty to do ſo; a duty that he owes to God by one law, and to his people by another. Now it is with this that I ſhall begin what I intend to offer concerning the ſyſtem of principles and conduct by which a PATRIOT KING will govern himſelf and his people. I ſhall not only begin higher, but deſcend into more detail, and keep ſtill in my eye the application of the whole to the conſtitution of Great Britain, even to the preſent ſtate of our nation, and temper of our people.

I THINK enough has been already ſaid, to eſtabliſh the firſt and true principles of monarchical and indeed of every other kind of government: and I will ſay with confidence, that no principles but theſe, and ſuch as theſe, can be advanced, which deſerve to be treated ſeriouſly; tho Mr. LOCKE condeſcended to examine thoſe of FILMER, more out of regard to the prejudices of the time, than to the importance of the work. Upon ſuch foundations we muſt conclude, that ſince men were directed by nature to form ſocieties, becauſe they cannot by their nature ſubſiſt without them, nor in a ſtate of individuality; and ſince they were directed in like manner to eſtabliſh governments, becauſe ſocieties cannot be maintained without them, nor ſubſiſt in a ſtate of anarchy; the ultimate end of all governments is the good of the people, for whoſe ſake they were made, and without whoſe conſent they could not have been made. In forming ſocieties, and ſubmitting to government, men gave up part of that liberty to which they are all born, and all alike. But why? is government incompatible with a full enjoyment of liberty? By no means. But becauſe popular liberty without government will degenerate into licence, as government without ſufficient liberty will degenerate into tyranny, they are mutually neceſſary to each other, good government to ſupport

legal liberty, and legal liberty to preſerve good government.

I SPEAK not here of people, if any ſuch there are, who have been ſavage or ſtupid enough to ſubmit to tyranny by original contract; nor of thoſe nations on whom tyranny has ſtolen as it were imperceptibly, or been impoſed by violence, and ſettled by preſcription. I ſhall exerciſe no political caſuiſtry about the rights of ſuch kings, and the obligations of ſuch people. Men are to take their lots, perhaps, in governments as in climates, to fence againſt the inconveniences of both, and to bear what they cannot alter. But I ſpeak of people who have been wiſe and happy enough to eſtabliſh, and to preſerve, free conſtitutions of government, as the people of this iſland have done. To theſe, therefore, I ſay, that their kings are under the moſt ſacred obligations that human law can create, and divine law authorize, to defend and maintain, in the firſt place, and preferably to every other conſideration, the freedom of ſuch conſtitutions.

THE good of the people is the ultimate and true end of government. Governors are, therefore, appointed for this end, and the civil conſtitution which appoints them, and inveſts them with their power, is determined to do ſo by that law of nature and reaſon, which has determined the end of government, and which admits this form of government as the proper mean of arriving at it. Now, the greateſt good of a people is their liberty: and, in the caſe here referred to, the people has judged it ſo, and provided for it accordingly. Liberty is to the collective body, what health is to every individual body. Without health no pleaſure can be taſted by man: without liberty no happineſs can be enjoyed by ſociety. The obligation, therefore to defend and maintain the freedom of ſuch

ſuch conſtitutions, will appear moſt ſacred to a PATRIOT KING.

KINGS who have weak underſtandings, bad hearts, and ſtrong prejudices, and all theſe, as it often happens, inflamed by their paſſions, and rendered incurable by their ſelf-conceit and preſumption; ſuch kings are apt to imagine, and they conduct themſelves ſo as to make many of their ſubjects imagine, that the king and the people in free governments are rival powers, who ſtand in competition with one another, who have different intereſts, and muſt of courſe have different views: that the rights and privileges of the people are ſo many ſpoils taken from the right and prerogative of the crown; and that the rules and laws, made for the exerciſe and ſecurity of the former, are ſo many diminutions of their dignity, and reſtraints on their power.

A PATRIOT KING will ſee all this in a far different and much truer light. The conſtitution will be conſidered by him as one law, conſiſting of two tables, containing the rule of his government, and the meaſure of his ſubjects obedience; or as one ſyſtem, compoſed of different parts and powers, but all duly proportioned to one another, and conſpiring by their harmony to the perfection of the whole. He will make one, and but one, diſtinction between his rights, and thoſe of his people: he will look on his to be a truſt, and theirs a property. He will diſcern, that he can have a right to no more than is truſted to him by the conſtitution: and that his people, who had an original right to the whole by the law of nature, can have the ſole indefeaſible right to any part; and really have ſuch a right to that part which they have reſerved to themſelves. In fine, the conſtitution will be reverenced by him as the law of God and of man; the force of

which binds the king as much as the meaneſt ſubject, and the reaſon of which binds him much more.

THUS he will think, and on theſe principles he will act, whether he come to the throne by immediate or remote election. I ſay remote; for in hereditary monarchies, where men are not elected, families are: and, therefore, ſome authors would have it believed, that when a family has been once admitted, and an hereditary right to the crown recognized in it, that right cannot be forfeited, nor that throne become vacant, as long as any heir of the family remains. How much more agreeable to truth and to common ſenſe would theſe authors have written, if they had maintained, that every prince who comes to a crown in the courſe of ſucceſſion, were he the laſt of five hundred, comes to it under the ſame conditions under which the firſt took it, whether expreſſed or implied; as well as under thoſe, if any ſuch there be, which have been ſince made by legal authority: and that royal blood can give no right, nor length of ſucceſſion any preſcription, againſt the conſtitution of a government? The firſt and the laſt hold by the ſame tenure.

I MENTION this the rather, becauſe I have an imperfect remembrance, that ſome ſcribler was employed, or employed himſelf, to aſſert the hereditary right of the preſent family. A taſk ſo unneceſſary to any good purpoſe, that, I believe, a ſuſpicion aroſe of its having been deſigned for a bad one. A PATRIOT KING will never countenance ſuch impertinent fallacies, nor deign to lean on broken reeds. He knows that his right is founded on the laws of God and man, that none can ſhake it but himſelf, and that his own virtue is ſufficient to maintain it againſt all oppoſition.

I HAVE dwelt the longer on the firſt and general principles of monarchical government, and have recurred the oftener to them, becauſe it ſeems to me that they are the ſeeds of patriotiſm, which muſt be ſown as ſoon as poſſible in the mind of a prince, leſt their growth ſhould be checked by luxuriant weeds, which are apt to abound in ſuch ſoils, and under which no crop of kingly virtues can ever flouriſh. A prince, who does not know the true principles, cannot propoſe to himſelf the true ends, of government: and he, who does not propoſe them, will never direct his conduct ſteadily to them. There is not a deeper, nor a finer obſervation in all my Lord BACON's works, than one which I ſhall apply and paraphraſe on this occaſion. The moſt compendious, the moſt noble, and the moſt effectual remedy, which can be oppoſed to the uncertain and irregular motions of the human mind, agitated by various paſſions, allured by various temptations, inclining ſometimes towards a ſtate of moral perfection, and oftener, even in the beſt, towards a ſtate of moral depravation, is this. We muſt chuſe betimes ſuch virtuous objects as are proportioned to the means we have of purſuing them, and as belong particularly to the ſtations we are in, and to the duties of thoſe ſtations. We muſt determine and fix our minds in ſuch manner upon them, that the purſuit of them may become the buſineſs, and the attainment of them the end, of our whole lives. Thus we ſhall imitate the great operations of nature, and not the feeble, ſlow, and imperfect operations of art. We muſt not proceed, in forming the moral character, as a ſtatuary proceeds in forming a ſtatue, who works ſometimes on the face, ſometimes on one part, and ſometimes on another: but we muſt proceed, and it is in our power to proceed, as nature does in forming a flower, an animal, or any other of her pro-

productions; "rudimenta partium omnium ſimul parit et "producit." "She throws out altogether, and at once, the "whole ſyſtem of every being, and the rudiments of all the "parts." The vegetable or the animal grows in bulk and increaſes in ſtrength; but is the ſame from the firſt. Juſt ſo our PATRIOT KING muſt be a patriot from the firſt. He muſt be ſuch in reſolution, before he grows ſuch in practice. He muſt fix at once the general principles and ends of all his actions, and determine that his whole conduct ſhall be regulated by them, and directed to them. When he has done this, he will have turned, by one great effort, the bent of his mind ſo ſtrongly towards the perfection of a kingly character, that he will exerciſe with eaſe, and as it were by a natural determination, all the virtues of it; which will be ſuggeſted to him on every occaſion by the principles wherewith his mind is imbued, and by thoſe ends that are the conſtant objects of his attention.

LET us then ſee in what manner, and with what effect he will do this, upon the greateſt occaſion he can have of exerciſing theſe virtues, the maintenance of liberty, and the reeſtabliſhment of a free conſtitution.

THE freedom of a conſtitution reſts on two points. The orders of it are one: ſo MACHIAVEL calls them, and I know not how to call them more ſignificantly. He means not only the forms and cuſtoms, but the different claſſes and aſſemblies of men, with different powers and privileges attributed to them, which are eſtabliſhed in the ſtate. The ſpirit and character of the people are the other. On the mutual conformity and harmony of theſe the preſervation of liberty depends. To take away, or eſſentially to alter the former, cannot be brought to paſs, whilſt the latter remains

mains in original purity and vigor: nor can liberty be deſtroyed by this method, unleſs the attempt be made with a military force ſufficient to conquer the nation, which would not ſubmit in this caſe till it was conquered, nor with much ſecurity to the conqueror even then. But theſe orders of the ſtate may be eſſentially altered, and ſerve more effectually to the deſtruction of liberty, than the taking of them away would ſerve, if the ſpirit and character of the people are loſt.

Now this method of deſtroying liberty is the moſt dangerous on many accounts, particularly on this; that even the reign of the weakeſt prince, and the policy of the weakeſt miniſtry, may effect the deſtruction, when circumſtances are favorable to this method. If a people is growing corrupt, there is no need of capacity to contrive, nor of inſinuation to gain, nor of plauſibility to ſeduce, nor of eloquence to perſuade, nor of authority to impoſe, nor of courage to attempt. The moſt incapable, aukward, ungracious, ſhocking, profligate, and timorous wretches, inveſted with power, and maſters of the purſe, will be ſufficient for the work, when the people are complices in it. Luxury is rapacious; let them feed it: the more it is fed, the more profuſe it will grow. Want is the conſequence of profuſion, venality of want, and dependance of venality. By this progreſſion, the firſt men of a nation will become the penſioners of the laſt; and he who has talents, the moſt implicit tool to him who has none. The diſtemper will ſoon deſcend, not indeed to make a depoſite below, and to remain there, but to pervade the whole body.

It may ſeem a ſingular, but it is perhaps a true propoſition, that ſuch a king and ſuch a miniſtry are more likely to begin, and to purſue with ſucceſs, this method of deſtroy-

ing a free conſtitution of government, than a king an a miniſtry that were held in great eſteem would be. This very eſteem might put many on their guard againſt the latter; but the former may draw from contempt the advantage of not being feared: and an advantage this is in the beginning of corruption. Men are willing to excuſe, not only to others but to themſelves, the firſt ſteps they take in vice, and eſpecially in vice that affects the public, and whereof the public has a right to complain. Thoſe, therefore, who might withſtand corruption in one caſe, from a perſuaſion that the conſequence was too certain to leave them any excuſe, may yield to it when they can flatter themſelves, and endeavour to flatter others, that liberty cannot be deſtroyed, nor the conſtitution be demoliſhed, by ſuch hands as hold the ſceptre, and guide the reins of the adminiſtration. But alas! the flattery is groſs, and the excuſe without colour. Theſe men may ruin their country, but they cannot impoſe on any, unleſs it be on themſelves. Nor will even this impoſition on themſelves be long neceſſary. Their conſciences will be ſoon ſeared, by habit and by example: and they, who wanted an excuſe to begin, will want none to continue and to complete, the tragedy of their country. Old men will outlive the ſhame of loſing liberty, and young men will ariſe who know not that it ever exiſted. A ſpirit of ſlavery will oppoſe and oppreſs the ſpirit of liberty, and ſeem at leaſt to be the genius of the nation. Such too it will become in time, when corruption has once grown to this height, unleſs the progreſs of it can be interrupted.

How ineſtimable a bleſſing therefore muſt the ſucceſſion of a PATRIOT KING be eſteemed in ſuch circumſtances as theſe, which would be a bleſſing, and a great one too, in any other? He, and he alone, can ſave a country whoſe ruin

is

is ſo far advanced. The utmoſt that private men can do, who remain untainted by the general contagion, is to keep the ſpirit of liberty alive in a few breaſts; to proteſt againſt what they cannot hinder, and to claim on every occaſion what they cannot by their own ſtrength recover.

MACHIAVEL has treated, in the diſcourſes before cited, this queſtion, "whether, when the people are grown cor-"rupt, a free government can be maintained, if they enjoy "it; or eſtabliſhed, if they enjoy it not?" And upon the whole matter he concludes for the difficulty, or rather the impoſſibility, of ſucceeding in either caſe. It will be worth while to obſerve his way of reaſoning. He aſſerts very truly, and proves by the example of the Roman commonwealth; that thoſe orders which are proper to maintain liberty, whilſt a people remain uncorrupt, become improper and hurtful to liberty, when a people is grown corrupt. To remedy this abuſe, new laws alone will not be ſufficient. Theſe orders, therefore, muſt be changed, according to him, and the conſtitution muſt be adapted to the depraved manners of the people. He ſhews, that ſuch a change in the orders, and conſtituent parts of the government, is impracticable, whether the attempt be made by gentle and ſlow, or by violent and precipitate meaſures: and from thence he concludes, that a free commonwealth can neither be maintained by a corrupt people, nor be eſtabliſhed among them. But he adds, that "if this can poſſibly be done, it muſt be "done by drawing the conſtitution to the monarchical form "of government," "acciochè quelli huomini i quali dalle "leggi non poſſono eſſere corretti, fuſſero da una podeſtá, in "qualche modo, frenati." "That a corrupt people, whom "law cannot correct, may be reſtrained and corrected by a "kingly power." Here is the hinge on which the whole turns.

ANOTHER advantage that a free monarchy has over all other forms of free government, beſides the advantage of being more eaſily and more uſefully tempered with ariſtocratical and democratical powers, which is mentioned above, is this. Thoſe governments are made up of different parts, and are apt to be disjointed by the ſhocks to which they are expoſed: but a free monarchical government is more compact, becauſe there is a part the more that keeps, like the key-ſtone of a vault, the whole building together. They cannot be mended in a ſtate of corruption, they muſt be in effect conſtituted anew, and in that attempt they may be diſſolved for ever: but this is not the caſe of a free monarchy. To preſerve liberty by new laws and new ſchemes of government, whilſt the corruption of a people continues and grows, is abſolutely impoſſible: but to reſtore and preſerve it under old laws, and an old conſtitution, by reinfuſing into the minds of men the ſpirit of this conſtitution, is not only poſſible, but is, in a particular manner, eaſy to a king. A corrupt commonwealth remains without remedy, tho all the orders and forms of it ſubſiſt: a free monarchical government cannot remain abſolutely ſo, as long as the orders and forms of the conſtitution ſubſiſt. Theſe, alone, are indeed nothing more than the dead letter of freedom, or maſks of liberty. In the firſt character they ſerve to no good purpoſe whatſoever: in the ſecond they ſerve to a bad one; becauſe tyranny, or government by will, becomes more ſevere, and more ſecure, under their diſguiſe, than it would if it was barefaced and avowed. But a king can, eaſily to himſelf and without violence to his people, renew the ſpirit of liberty in their minds, quicken this dead letter, and pull off this maſk.

As ſoon as corruption ceaſes to be an expedient of government, and it will ceaſe to be ſuch as ſoon as a PATRIOT KING is raiſed to the throne, the panacea is applied; the ſpirit of the conſtitution revives of courſe: and, as faſt as it revives, the orders and forms of the conſtitution are reſtored to their primitive integrity, and become what they were intended to be, real barriers againſt arbitrary power, not blinds nor maſks under which tyranny may lie concealed. Depravation of manners expoſed the conſtitution to ruin: reformation will ſecure it. Men decline eaſily from virtue; for there is a devil too in the political ſyſtem, a conſtant tempter at hand: a PATRIOT KING will want neither power nor inclination to caſt out this devil, to make the temptation ceaſe, and to deliver his ſubjects, if not from the guilt, yet from the conſequence, of their fall. Under him, they will not only ceaſe to do evil, but learn to do well; for, by rendering public virtue and real capacity the ſole means of acquiring any degree of power or profit in the ſtate, he will ſet the paſſions of their hearts on the ſide of liberty and good government. A PATRIOT KING is the moſt powerful of all reformers; for he is himſelf a ſort of ſtanding miracle, ſo rarely ſeen and ſo little underſtood, that the ſure effects of his appearance will be admiration and love in every honeſt breaſt, confuſion and terror to every guilty conſcience, but ſubmiſſion and reſignation in all. A new people will ſeem to ariſe with a new king. Innumerable metamorphoſes, like thoſe which poets feign, will happen in very deed: and, while men are conſcious that they are the ſame individuals, the difference of their ſentiments will almoſt perſuade them that they are changed into different beings.

BUT, that we may not expect more from ſuch a king than even he can perform, it is neceſſary to premiſe another general obſervation, after which I ſhall deſcend into ſome that will be more particular.

ABSOLUTE ſtability is not to be expected in any thing human; for that which exiſts immutably exiſts alone neceſſarily, and this attribute of the Supreme Being, can neither belong to man, nor to the works of man. The beſt inſtituted governments, like the beſt conſtituted animal bodies, carry in them the ſeeds of their deſtruction: and, tho they grow and improve for a time, they will ſoon tend viſibly to their diſſolution. Every hour they live is an hour the leſs that they have to live. All that can be done, therefore, to prolong the duration of a good government, is to draw it back, on every favorable occaſion, to the firſt good principles on which it was founded. When theſe occaſions happen often, and are well improved, ſuch governments are proſperous and durable. When they happen ſeldom, or are ill improved, theſe political bodies live in pain, or in languor, and die ſoon.

A PATRIOT KING affords one of the occaſions I mention in a free monarchical ſtate, and the very beſt that can happen. It ſhould be improved, like ſnatches of fair weather at ſea, to repair the damages ſuſtained in the laſt ſtorm, and to prepare to reſiſt the next. For ſuch a king cannot ſecure to his people a ſucceſſion of princes like himſelf. He will do all he can towards it, by his example and by his inſtruction. But after all, the royal mantle will not convey the ſpirit of patriotiſm into another king, as the mantle of ELIJAH did the gift of prophecy into another prophet.

The utmoſt he can do, and that which deſerves the utmoſt gratitude from his ſubjects, is to reſtore good government, to revive the ſpirit of it, and to maintain and confirm both, during the whole courſe of his reign. The reſt his people muſt do for themſelves. If they do not, they will have none but themſelves to blame: if they do, they will have the principal obligation to him. In all events, they will have been free men one reign the longer by his means, and perhaps more; ſince he will leave them much better prepared and diſpoſed to defend their liberties, than he found them.

This general obſervation being made, let us now deſcend, in ſome detail, to the particular ſteps and meaſures that ſuch a king muſt purſue, to merit a much nobler title than all thoſe which many princes of the weſt, as well as the eaſt, are ſo proud to accumulate.

First then, he muſt begin to govern as ſoon as he begins to reign. For the very firſt ſteps he makes in government will give the firſt impreſſion, and as it were the preſage of his reign; and may be of great importance in many other reſpects beſides that of opinion and reputation. His firſt care will be, no doubt, to purge his court, and to call into the adminiſtration ſuch men as he can aſſure himſelf will ſerve on the ſame principles on which he intends to govern.

As to the firſt point; if the precedent reign has been bad, we know how he will find the court compoſed. The men in power will be ſome of thoſe adventurers, buſy and bold, who thruſt and crowd themſelves early into the intrigue of party and the management of affairs of ſtate, often without true ability, always without true ambition, or even the appearances of virtue: who mean nothing more than what

what is called making a fortune, the acquiſition of wealth to ſatisfy avarice, and of titles and ribbands to ſatisfy vanity. Such as theſe are ſure to be employed by a weak, or a wicked king: they impoſe on the firſt, and are choſen by the laſt. Nor is it marvellous that they are ſo, ſince every other want is ſupplied in them by the want of good principles and a good conſcience; and ſince theſe defects become miniſterial perfections, in a reign when meaſures are purſued and deſigns carried on that every honeſt man will diſapprove. All the proſtitutes who ſet themſelves to ſale, all the locuſts who devour the land, with crowds of ſpies, paraſites, and ſycophants, will ſurround the throne under the patronage of ſuch miniſters; and whole ſwarms of little, nuiſome, nameleſs inſects will hum and buzz in every corner of the court. Such miniſters will be caſt off, and ſuch abettors of a miniſtry will be chaſed away together, and at once, by a PATRIOT KING.

SOME of them perhaps will be abandoned by him; not to party-fury, but to national juſtice; not to ſate private reſentments, and to ſerve particular intereſts, but to make ſatisfaction for wrongs done to their country, and to ſtand as examples of terror to future adminiſtrations. Clemency makes, no doubt, an amiable part of the character I attempt to draw; but clemency, to be a virtue, muſt have its bounds, like other virtues: and ſurely theſe bounds are extended enough by a maxim I have read ſomewhere, that frailties and even vices may be paſſed over, but not enormous crimes; "multa donanda ingeniis puto, ſed donanda vitia, non por-"tenta."

AMONG the bad company, with which ſuch a court will abound, may be reckoned a ſort of men too low to be much regarded, and too high to be quite neglected; the lumber of every

every adminiſtration, the furniture of every court. Theſe gilt carved things are ſeldom anſwerable for more than the men on a cheſs-board, who are moved about at will, and on whom the conduct of the game is not to be charged. Some of theſe every prince muſt have about him. The pageantry of a court requires that he ſhould: and this pageantry, like many other deſpicable things, ought not to be laid aſide. But as much ſameneſs as there may appear in the characters of this ſort of men, there is one diſtinction that will be made, whenever a good prince ſucceeds to the throne after an iniquitous adminiſtration: the diſtinction I mean is, between thoſe who have affected to dip themſelves deeply in precedent iniquities, and thoſe who have had the virtue to keep aloof from them, or the good luck not to be called to any ſhare in them. And thus much for the firſt point, that of purging his court.

As to the ſecond, that of calling to his adminiſtration ſuch men as he can aſſure himſelf will ſerve on the ſame principles on which he intends to govern, there is no need to enlarge much upon it. A good prince will no more chuſe ill men, than a wiſe prince will chuſe fools. Deception in one caſe is indeed more eaſy than in the other; becauſe a knave may be an artful hypocrite, whereas a ſilly fellow can never impoſe himſelf for a man of ſenſe. And leaſt of all, in a country like ours, can either of theſe deceptions happen, if any degree of the diſcernment of ſpirits be employed to chuſe. The reaſon is, becauſe every man here, who ſtands forward enough in rank and reputation to be called to the councils of his king, muſt have given proofs before-hand of his patriotiſm, as well as of his capacity, if he has either, ſufficient to determine his general character.

THERE

THERE is, however, one diſtinction to be made as to the capacity of miniſters, on which I will inſiſt a little: becauſe I think it very important at all times, particularly ſo at this time; and becauſe it eſcapes obſervation moſt commonly. The diſtinction I mean is that between a cunning man and a wiſe man: and this diſtinction is built on a manifeſt difference in nature, how imperceptible ſoever it may become to weak eyes, or to eyes that look at their object through the falſe medium of cuſtom and habit. My lord BACON ſays, that cunning is left-handed or crooked wiſdom. I would rather ſay, that it is a part, but the loweſt part, of wiſdom; employed alone by ſome, becauſe they have not the other parts to employ; and by ſome, becauſe it is as much as they want, within thoſe bounds of action which they preſcribe to themſelves, and ſufficient to the ends that they propoſe. The difference ſeems to conſiſt in degree, and application, rather than in kind. Wiſdom is neither left-handed, nor crooked: but the heads of ſome men contain little, and the hearts of others employ it wrong. To uſe my lord BACON's own compariſon, the cunning man knows how to pack the cards, the wiſe man how to play the game better: but it would be of no uſe to the firſt to pack the cards, if his knowledge ſtopped here, and he had no ſkill in the game; nor to the ſecond to play the game better, if he did not know how to pack the cards, that he might unpack them by new ſhuffling. Inferior wiſdom or cunning may get the better of folly: but ſuperior wiſdom will get the better of cunning. Wiſdom and cunning have often the ſame objects; but a wiſe man will have more and greater in his view. The leaſt will not fill his ſoul, nor ever become the principal there; but will be purſued in ſubſerviency, in ſubordination at leaſt, to the other. Wiſdom and cunning may employ ſome-

ſometimes the ſame means too: but the wiſe man ſtoops to theſe means, and the other cannot riſe above them. Simulation and diſſimulation, for inſtance, are the chief arts of cunning: the firſt will be eſteemed always by a wiſe man unworthy of him, and will be therefore avoided by him, in every poſſible caſe; for, to reſume my lord BACON's compariſon, ſimulation is put on that we may look into the cards of another, whereas diſſimulation intends nothing more than to hide our own. Simulation is a ſtiletto, not only an offenſive, but an unlawful weapon: and the uſe of it may be rarely, very rarely, excuſed, but never juſtified. Diſſimulation is a ſhield, as ſecrecy is armour: and it is no more poſſible to preſerve ſecrecy in the adminiſtration of public affairs without ſome degree of diſſimulation, than it is to ſucceed in it without ſecrecy. Thoſe two arts of cunning are like the alloy mingled with pure ore. A little is neceſſary, and will not debaſe the coin below its proper ſtandard; but if more than that little be employed, the coin loſes its currency, and the coiner his credit.

WE may obſerve much the ſame difference between wiſdom and cunning, both as to the objects they propoſe and to the means they employ, as we obſerve between the viſual powers of different men. One ſees diſtinctly the objects that are near to him, their immediate relations, and their direct tendencies: and a ſight like this ſerves well enough the purpoſe of thoſe who concern themſelves no further. The cunning miniſter is one of thoſe: he neither ſees, nor is concerned to ſee, any further than his perſonal intereſts, and the ſupport of his adminiſtration, require. If ſuch a man overcomes any actual difficulty, avoids any immediate diſtreſs, or, without doing either of theſe effectually, gains a little time, by all the low artifice which cunning is ready to ſuggeſt and baſeneſs

of mind to employ, he triumphs, and is flattered by his mercenary train, on the great event; which amounts often to no more than this, that he got into diſtreſs by one ſeries of faults, and out of it by another. The wiſe miniſter ſees, and is concerned to ſee further, becauſe government has a further concern: he ſees the objects that are diſtant as well as thoſe that are near, and all their remote relations, and even their indirect tendencies. He thinks of fame as well as of applauſe, and prefers that, which to be enjoyed muſt be given, to that which may be bought. He conſiders his adminiſtration as a ſingle day in the great year of government; but as a day that is affected by thoſe which went before, and that muſt affect thoſe which are to follow. He combines, therefore, and compares all theſe objects, relations, and tendencies; and the judgment he makes, on an entire not a partial ſurvey of them, is the rule of his conduct. That ſcheme of the reaſon of ſtate, which lies open before a wiſe miniſter, contains all the great principles of government, and all the great intereſts of his country: ſo that, as he prepares ſome events, he prepares againſt others, whether they be likely to happen during his adminiſtration, or in ſome future time.

MANY reflections might be added to theſe, and many examples be brought to illuſtrate them. Some I could draw from the men I have ſeen at the head of buſineſs, and make very ſtrong contraſts of men of great wiſdom with thoſe of mere cunning. But I conclude this head, that I may proceed to another of no leſs importance.

TO eſpouſe no party, but to govern like the common father of his people, is ſo eſſential to the character of a PATRIOT KING, that he who does otherwiſe forfeits the title. It is the peculiar privilege and glory of this character, that

princes

princes who maintain it, and they alone, are ſo far from the neceſſity, that they are not expoſed to the temptation, of governing by a party; which muſt always end in the government of a faction: the faction of the prince, if he has ability; the faction of his miniſters, if he has not; and, either one way or other, in the oppreſſion of the people. For faction is to party what the ſuperlative is to the poſitive: party is a political evil, and faction is the worſt of all parties. The true image of a free people, governed by a PATRIOT KING, is that of a patriarchal family, where the head and all the members are united by one common intereſt, and animated by one common ſpirit: and where, if any are perverſe enough to have another, they will be ſoon borne down by the ſuperiority of thoſe who have the ſame; and, far from making a diviſion, they will but confirm the union of the little ſtate. That to approach as near as poſſible to theſe ideas of perfect government, and ſocial happineſs under it, is deſirable in every ſtate, no man will be abſurd enough to deny. The ſole queſtion is, therefore, how near to them it is poſſible to attain? For, if this attempt be not abſolutely impracticable, all the views of a PATRIOT KING will be directed to make it ſucceed. Inſtead of abetting the diviſions of his people, he will endeavour to unite them, and to be himſelf the centre of their union: inſtead of putting himſelf at the head of one party in order to govern his people, he will put himſelf at the head of his people in order to govern, or more properly to ſubdue, all parties. Now, to arrive at this deſirable union, and to maintain it, will be found more difficult in ſome caſes than in others, but abſolutely impoſſible in none, to a wiſe and good prince.

IF his people are united in their ſubmiſſion to him, and in their attachment to the eſtabliſhed government, he muſt

not only eſpouſe but create a party, in order to govern by one: and what ſhould tempt him to purſue ſo wild a meaſure? A prince, who aims at more power than the conſtitution gives him, may be ſo tempted; becauſe he may hope to obtain in the diſorders of the ſtate what cannot be obtained in quiet times; and becauſe contending parties will give what a nation will not. Parties, even before they degenerate into abſolute factions, are ſtill numbers of men aſſociated together for certain purpoſes, and certain intereſts, which are not, or which are not allowed to be, thoſe of the community by others. A more private or perſonal intereſt comes but too ſoon, and too often, to be ſuperadded, and to grow predominant in them: and when it does ſo, whatever occaſions or principles began to form them, the ſame logic prevails in them that prevails in every church. The intereſt of the ſtate is ſuppoſed to be that of the party, as the intereſt of religion is ſuppoſed to be that of the church: and, with this pretence or prepoſſeſſion, the intereſt of the ſtate becomes, like that of religion, a remote conſideration, is never purſued for it's own ſake, and is often ſacrificed to the other. A king, therefore, who has ill deſigns to carry on, muſt endeavor to divide an united people; and by blending or ſeeming to blend his intereſts with that of a party, he may ſucceed perhaps, and his party and he may ſhare the ſpoils of a ruined nation: but ſuch a party is then become a faction, ſuch a king is a tyrant, and ſuch a government is a conſpiracy. A PATRIOT KING muſt renounce his character, to have ſuch deſigns; or act againſt his own deſigns, to purſue ſuch methods. Both are too abſurd to be ſuppoſed. It remains, therefore, that as all the good ends of government are moſt attainable in an united ſtate, and as the diviſions of a people can ſerve to bad purpoſes alone, the king we ſuppoſe here will deem the union of his ſubjects his greateſt advantage, and will think himſelf

happy to find that eſtabliſhed, which he would have employed the whole labor of his life to bring about. This ſeems ſo plain, that I am ready to make excuſes for having inſiſted at all upon it.

LET us turn ourſelves to another ſuppoſition, to that of a divided ſtate. This will fall in oftener with the ordinary courſe of things in free governments, and eſpecially after iniquitous and weak adminiſtrations. Such a ſtate may be better or worſe, and the great and good purpoſes of a PATRIOT KING more or leſs attainable in it, according to the different nature of thoſe diviſions: and, therefore, we will conſider this ſtate in different lights.

A PEOPLE may be united in ſubmiſſion to the prince, and to the eſtabliſhment, and yet be divided about general principles, or particular meaſures of government. In the firſt caſe, they will do by their conſtitution what has been frequently done by the Scripture, ſtrain it to their own notions and prejudices; and, if they cannot ſtrain it, alter it as much as is neceſſary to render it conformable to them. In the ſecond, they will ſupport or oppoſe particular acts of adminiſtrations, and defend or attack the perſons employed in them: and both theſe ways a conflict of parties may ariſe, but no great difficulty to a prince who determines to purſue the union of his ſubjects, and the proſperity of his kingdoms independently of all parties.

WHEN parties are divided by different notions and principles concerning ſome particular eccleſiaſtical or civil inſtitutions, the conſtitution, which ſhould be their rule, muſt be that of the prince. He may and he ought to ſhew his diſlike or his favor, as he judges the conſtitution may be hurt or improved;

proved, by one ſide or the other. The hurt he is never to ſuffer, not for his own ſake; and therefore ſurely not for the ſake of any whimſical, factious, or ambitious ſet of men. The improvement he muſt always deſire; but as every new modification in a ſcheme of government and of national policy is of great importance, and requires more and deeper conſideration than the warmth, and hurry, and raſhneſs of party-conduct admit, the duty of a prince ſeems to require that he ſhould render by his influence the proceedings more orderly and more deliberate, even when he approves the end to which they are directed. All this may be done by him without fomenting diviſion: and, far from forming or eſpouſing a party, he will defeat party in defence of the conſtitution, on ſome occaſions; and lead men, from acting with a party-ſpirit, to act with a national ſpirit, on others.

When the diviſion is about particular meaſures of government, and the conduct of the adminiſtration is alone concerned, a Patriot King will ſtand in want of party as little as in any other caſe. Under his reign, the opportunities of forming an oppoſition of this ſort will be rare, and the pretences generally weak. Nay, the motives to it will loſe much of their force, when a government is ſtrong in reputation, and men are kept in good humor by feeling the rod of a party on no occaſion, tho they feel the weight of the ſceptre on ſome. Such opportunities, however, may happen; and there may be reaſon, as well as pretences, ſometimes for oppoſition even in ſuch a reign: at leaſt we will ſuppoſe ſo, that we may include in this argument every contingent caſe. Grievances then are complained of, miſtakes and abuſes in government are pointed out, and miniſters are proſecuted by their enemies. Shall the prince on the throne form a party by intrigue, and by ſecret and corrupt influence, to

oppoſe the proſecution? When the prince and the miniſters are "participes criminis," when every thing is to be defended, leſt ſomething ſhould come out, that may unravel the ſilly wicked ſcheme, and diſcloſe to public ſight the whole turpitude of the adminiſtration; there is no help, this muſt be done, and ſuch a party muſt be formed, becauſe ſuch a party alone will ſubmit to a drudgery of this kind. But a prince, who is not in theſe circumſtances, will not have recourſe to theſe means. He has others more open, more noble, and more effectual in his power: he knows that the views of his government are right, and that the tenor of his adminiſtration is good; but he knows that neither he nor his miniſters are infallible, nor impeccable. There may be abuſes in his government, miſtakes in his adminiſtration, and guilt in his miniſters, which he has not obſerved: and he will be far from imputing the complaints, that gave him occaſion to obſerve them, to a ſpirit of party; much leſs will he treat thoſe who carry on ſuch proſecutions in a legal manner, as incendiaries, and as enemies to his government. On the contrary, he will diſtinguiſh the voice of his people from the clamor of a faction, and will hearken to it. He will redreſs grievances, correct errors, and reform or puniſh miniſters. This he will do as a good prince: and as a wiſe one, he will do it in ſuch a manner that his dignity ſhall be maintained, and that his authority ſhall increaſe, with his reputation, by it.

Should the efforts of a mere faction be bent to calumniate his government, and to diſtreſs the adminiſtration on groundleſs pretences, and for inſufficient reaſons; he will not neglect, but he will not apprehend neither, the ſhort-lived and contemptible ſcheme. He will indeed have no reaſon to do ſo; for let the fautors of male-adminiſtration, whenever an oppoſition is made to it, affect to inſinuate as much as they pleaſe, that

that their maſters are in no other circumſtances than thoſe to which the very beſt miniſters ſtand expoſed, objects of general envy and of particular malice, it will remain eternally true, that groundleſs oppoſition, in a well-regulated monarchy, can never be ſtrong and durable. To be convinced of the truth of this propoſition, one needs only to reflect how many well-grounded attacks have been defeated, and how few have ſucceeded, againſt the moſt wicked and the weakeſt adminiſtrations. Every king of Britain has means enough in his power, to defeat and to calm oppoſition. But a PATRIOT KING, above all others, may ſafely reſt his cauſe on the innocency of his adminiſtration, on the conſtitutional ſtrength of the crown, and on the concurrence of his people, to whom he dares appeal, and by whom he will be ſupported.

To conclude all I will ſay on the diviſions of this kind; let me add, that the caſe of a groundleſs oppoſition can hardly happen in a bad reign, becauſe in ſuch a reign juſt occaſions of oppoſition muſt of courſe be frequently given, as we have allowed that they may be given ſometimes, tho very rarely, in a good reign; but that, whether it be well or ill grounded, whether it be that of the nation, or that of a faction, the conduct of the prince with reſpect to it will be the ſame; and one way or other this conduct muſt have a very fatal event. Such a prince will not mend the adminiſtration, as long as he can reſiſt the juſteſt and moſt popular oppoſition: and, therefore, this oppoſition will laſt and grow, as long as a free conſtitution is in force, and the ſpirit of liberty is preſerved; for ſo long even a change of his miniſters, without a change of his meaſures, will not be ſufficient. The former without the latter is a mere banter, and would be deemed and taken for ſuch, by every man who did not oppoſe on a factious principle; that I mean of getting into power at any rate, and uſing

uſing it as ill, perhaps worſe than the men he helped to turn out of it. Now if ſuch men as theſe abound, and they will abound in the decline of a free government, a bad prince, whether he changes or does not change his miniſters, may hope to govern by the ſpirit and art of a faction, againſt the ſpirit and ſtrength of the nation. His character may be too low, and that of his miniſter too odious, to form originally even a faction that ſhall be able to defend them. But they may apply to their purpoſes a party that was formed on far different occaſions, and bring numbers to fight for a cauſe in which many of them would not have liſted. The names, and with the names the animoſity of parties, may be kept up, when the cauſes that formed them ſubſiſt no longer.

When a party is thus revived or continued in the ſpirit of a faction, the corrupt and the infatuated members of it will act without any regard to right or wrong: and they who have aſſerted liberty in one reign, or oppoſed invaſions of one kind, will give it up in another reign, and abet invaſions of another kind; tho they ſtill diſtinguiſh themſelves by the ſame appellation, ſtill ſpread the ſame banner, and ſtill deafen their adverſaries and one another with the ſame cry. If the national cauſe prevails againſt all the wicked arts of corruption and diviſion, that an obſtinate prince and flagitious miniſtry can employ; yet will the ſtruggle be long, and the difficulties, the diſtreſſes, and the danger great, both to the king and to the people. The beſt he can hope for, in ſuch a caſe, will be to eſcape with a diminution of his reputation, authority, and power. He may be expoſed to ſomething worſe; and his obſtinacy may force things to ſuch extremities, as they who oppoſe him will lament, and as the preſervation of liberty and good government can alone juſtify. If the wicked arts I ſpeak of prevail, faction will be propagated through the whole nation, an ill or well grounded oppoſition

will be the queſtion no longer, and the conteſt among parties will be, who ſhall govern, not, how they ſhall be governed. In ſhort, univerſal confuſion will follow, and a complete victory, on any ſide, will enſlave all ſides.

I HAVE not over-charged the draught. Such conſequences muſt follow ſuch a conduct: and therefore let me aſk, how much more ſafe, more eaſy, more pleaſant, more honorable is it, for a prince to correct, if he has not prevented, male-adminiſtration? That he may be able to reſt his cauſe, as I ſaid before, on the ſtrength of the crown and the concurrence of his people, whenever any faction preſumes to riſe in oppoſition to him.

THIS a PATRIOT KING will do. He may favor one party and diſcourage another, upon occaſions wherein the ſtate of his kingdom makes ſuch a temporary meaſure neceſſary: but he will eſpouſe none, much leſs will he proſcribe any. He will liſt no party, much leſs will he do the meaneſt and moſt imprudent thing a king can do, liſt himſelf in any. It will be his aim to purſue true principles of government independently of all: and, by a ſteddy adherence to this meaſure, his reign will become an undeniable and glorious proof, that a wiſe and good prince may unite his ſubjects, and be himſelf the centre of their union, notwithſtanding any of theſe diviſions that have been hitherto mentioned.

LET us now view the divided ſtate of a nation in another light. In this, the diviſions will appear more odious, more dangerous; leſs dependent on the influence, and leſs ſubject to the authority, of the crown. Such will be the ſtate, whenever a people is divided about ſubmiſſion to their prince, and a party is formed, of ſpirit and ſtrength ſufficient to oppoſe,

oppoſe, even in arms, the eſtabliſhed government. But in this caſe, deſperate as it may ſeem, a PATRIOT KING will not deſpair of reconciling, and re-uniting his ſubjects to himſelf, and to one another. He may be obliged, perhaps, as HENRY the fourth of France was, to conquer his own; but then, like that great prince, if he is the conqueror, he will be the father too, of his people. He muſt purſue in arms thoſe who preſume to take arms againſt him; but he will purſue them like rebellious children whom he ſeeks to reclaim, and not like irreconcileable enemies whom he endeavors to exterminate. Another prince may blow up the flame of civil war by unprovoked ſeverity, render thoſe zealous againſt him who were at worſt indifferent, and determine the diſaffection of others to open rebellion. When he has prevailed againſt the faction he helped to form, as he could not have prevailed if the bent of the nation had been againſt him, he may be willing to aſcribe his ſucceſs to a party, that he may have that pretence to govern by a party: and, far from reconciling the minds that have been alienated from him, and re-uniting his ſubjects in a willing unforced ſubmiſſion to him, he may be content to maintain himſelf on that throne, where the laws of God and man have placed him, by the melancholy expedient that uſurpers and tyrants, who have no other in their power, employ; the expedient of force. But a PATRIOT KING will act with another ſpirit, and entertain nobler and wiſer views, from firſt to laſt, and thro the whole courſe of ſuch a conjuncture. Nothing leſs than the hearts of his people will content ſuch a prince; nor will he think his throne eſtabliſhed, till it is eſtabliſhed there. That he may have time and opportunity to gain them, therefore, he will prevent the flame from breaking out, if by art and management he can do it. If he cannot, he will endeavor to keep it from ſpreading: and, if the phrenſy of rebellion diſappoints him in both theſe at-

tempts, he will remember peace, like the heroic king I juſt now quoted, in the midſt of war. Like him he will forego advantages of puſhing the latter, rather than loſe an opportunity of promoting the former: like him, in the heat of battle he will ſpare, and in the triumph of victory condeſcend: like him, he will beat down the violence of this flame, by his valor, and extinguiſh even the embers of it, by his lenity.

It may happen, that a prince, capable of holding ſuch a conduct as this, may not have the opportunity. He may ſucceed to the throne after a contrary conduct has been held: and when, among other diviſions which male-adminiſtration and the tyranny of faction have increaſed and confirmed, there is one againſt the eſtabliſhed government ſtill in being, tho not ſtill in arms. The uſe is obvious, which a faction in power might make of ſuch a circumſtance under a weak prince, by ranking in that diviſion all thoſe who oppoſed the adminiſtration; or at leaſt by holding out equal danger to him from two quarters, from their enemies who meant him no harm, and from his enemies who could do him none. But ſo groſs an artifice will not impoſe on a prince of another character: he will ſoon diſcern the diſtinctions it becomes him to make. He will ſee, in this inſtance, how faction breeds, nouriſhes, and perpetuates faction: he will obſerve how far that of the court contributed to form the other, and contributes ſtill to keep it in countenance and credit, among thoſe who conſider more what ſuch men are againſt, than what they are for. He will obſerve, how much that of the diſaffected gives pretence to the other who keeps a monopoly of power and wealth; one of which oppreſſes, and the other beggars, the reſt of the nation. His penetration will ſoon diſcover, that theſe factions break in but little on the body of his people, and that it depends on him alone to take from them

them even the ſtrength they have; becauſe that of the former is acquired entirely by his authority and purſe, and that of the latter principally by the abuſe which the former makes of both. Upon the whole, the meaſures he has to purſue towards the great object of a PATRIOT KING, the union of his people, will appear to him extremely eaſy. How ſhould they be otherwiſe? One of the factions muſt be diſſolved, the moment that the favor of the prince is withdrawn: and the other is diſarmed, as ſoon as it is marked out. It will have no ſhelter, and it muſt therefore be ſo marked out, under a good and wiſe adminiſtration; for, whether the members of it avow their principles by refuſing thoſe teſts of fidelity which the law requires, or perjure themſelves by taking them, they will be known alike. One difference, and but one will be made between them in the general ſenſe of mankind, a difference ariſing from the greater degree of infamy that will belong juſtly to the latter. The firſt may paſs for fools; the latter muſt paſs, without excuſe, for knaves.

THE terms I uſe ſound harſhly, but the cenſure is juſt: and it will appear to be ſo in the higheſt degree, and upon the higheſt reaſon, if we ſtop to make a reflection or two, that deſerve very well to be made, on the conduct of our Jacobites; for I deſire no ſtronger inſtance on which to eſtabliſh the cenſure, and to juſtify the terms I have uſed. Now all theſe, whether they ſwear or whether they do not, are liable to one particular objection, that did not lie againſt thoſe who were, in former days, enemies to the king on the throne. In the days of York and Lancaſter, for inſtance, a man might be againſt the prince on the throne, without being againſt the conſtitution of his country. The conſtitution conveyed the crown by hereditary right in the ſame family: and he who was a Yorkiſt, and he who was a Lancaſtrian, might,

and

and I doubt not did, pretend in every conteſt to have this right on his ſide. The ſame conſtitution was acknowledged by both: and, therefore, ſo much indulgence was ſhewn by law to both, at leaſt in the time of HENRY the ſeventh, that ſubmiſſion to a king "de facto" could not be imputed as a crime to either. Thus again, to deſcend lower in hiſtory; when the excluſion of the duke of YORK was preſſed in the reign of CHARLES the ſecond, the right of that prince to the crown was not diſputed. His divine right indeed, ſuch a divine right as his grandfather and father had aſſerted before him, was not much regarded; but his right by the conſtitution, his legal right, was ſufficiently owned by thoſe who inſiſted on a law as neceſſary to bar it. But every Jacobite, at this time, goes beyond all theſe examples, and is a rebel to the conſtitution under which he is born, as well as to the prince on the throne. The law of his country has ſettled the right of ſucceſſion in a new family. He reſiſts this law, and aſſerts, on his own private authority, not only a right in contradiction to it, but a right extinguiſhed by it. This abſurdity is ſo great, that it cannot be defended, except by advancing a greater: and therefore it is urged, that no power on earth could alter the conſtitution in this reſpect, nor extinguiſh a right to the crown inherent in the Stuart family, and derived from a ſuperior, that is, from a divine, authority. This kind of plea for refuſing ſubmiſſion to the laws of the land, if it was admitted, would ſerve any purpoſe as well as that for which it is brought. Our fanatics urged it formerly, and I do not ſee why a conſcientious fifth-monarchy man had not as much right to urge it formerly, as a Jacobite has now. But if conſcience, that is private opinion, may excuſe the fifth-monarchy-man and the Jacobite, who act conformably to it, from all imputations except thoſe of madneſs and folly; how ſhall the latter be excuſed when

he forſwears the principles he retains, acknowledges the right he renounces, takes oaths with an intent to violate them, and calls God to witneſs to a premeditated lye? Some caſuiſtry has been employed to excuſe theſe men to themſelves and to others. But ſuch caſuiſtry, and in truth every other, deſtroys, by diſtinctions and exceptions, all morality, and effaces the eſſential difference between right and wrong, good and evil. This the ſchoolmen in general have done on many occaſions; the ſons of LOYOLA in particular: and I wiſh with all my heart that nothing of the ſame kind could be objected to any other divines. Some political reaſoning has been employed, as well as the caſuiſtry here ſpoken of, and to the ſame purpoſe. It has been ſaid, that the conduct of thoſe who are enemies to the eſtabliſhment, to which they ſubmit and ſwear, is juſtified by the principles of the Revolution. But nothing can be more falſe and frivolous. By the principles of the Revolution, a ſubject may reſiſt, no doubt, the prince who endeavours to ruin and enſlave his people, and may puſh this reſiſtance to the dethronement and excluſion of him and his race: but will it follow, that, becauſe we may juſtly take arms againſt a prince whoſe right to govern we once acknowledged, and who by ſubſequent acts has forfeited that right, we may ſwear to a right we do not acknowledge, and reſiſt a prince whoſe conduct has not forfeited the right we ſwore to, nor given any juſt diſpenſation from our oaths?

BUT I ſhall lengthen this digreſſion no further: it is on a ſubject I have treated in public writings, the refutation of which never came to my hands, and, I think, never will. I return to the ſubject of my preſent diſcourſe. And I ſay, that ſuch factions as theſe can never create any obſtruction to a prince who purſues the union of his ſubjects, nor diſturb the peace of his government. The men who compoſe them muſt

muſt be deſperate, and impotent; the moſt deſpicable of all characters, when they go together. Every honeſt and ſenſible man will diſtinguiſh himſelf out of their number: and they will remain, as they deſerve to be, hewers of wood, and drawers of water, to the reſt of their fellow-ſubjects.

They will remain ſuch, if they are abandoned to themſelves, and to that habitual infatuation which they have not ſenſe and ſpirit enough to break. But if a prince, out of goodneſs or policy, ſhould think it worth his while to take them from under this influence, and to break theſe habits; even this diviſion, the moſt abſurd of all others, will not be found incurable. A man who has not ſeen the inſide of parties, nor had opportunities to examine nearly their ſecret motives, can hardly conceive how little a ſhare principle of any ſort, tho principle of ſome ſort or other be always pretended, has in the determination of their conduct. Reaſon has ſmall effect on numbers. A turn of imagination, often as violent and as ſudden as a guſt of wind, determines their conduct: and paſſion is taken, by others, and by themſelves too, when it grows into habit eſpecially, for principle. What gave ſtrength and ſpirit to a Jacobite party after the late king's acceſſion? The true anſwer is, a ſudden turn of the imaginations of a whole party to reſentment and rage, that were turned a little before to quiet ſubmiſſion, and patient expectation. Principle had as little ſhare in making the turn, as reaſon had in conducting it. Men who had ſenſe, and temper too, before that moment, thought of nothing, after it, but of ſetting up a tory king againſt a whig king: and when ſome of them were aſked, if they were ſure a popiſh king would make a good tory king? or whether they were determined to ſacrifice their religion and liberty to him? the anſwer was, No; that they would take arms againſt him if he made attempts

on either; that this might be the caſe, perhaps, in ſix months after his reſtoration, but that, in the mean time, they would endeavor his reſtoration. This is no exaggerated fact: and I leave all men to judge, to what ſuch ſentiments and conduct muſt be aſcribed, to principle or paſſion, to reaſon or madneſs? What gives obſtinacy without ſtrength, and ſullenneſs without ſpirit, to the Jacobite-tories at this time? Another turn of imagination, or rather the ſame ſhewing itſelf in another form; a factious habit, and a factious notion, converted into a notion of policy and honor. They are taught to believe, that by clinging together they are a conſiderable weight, which may be thrown in to turn the ſcale in any great event; and that in the mean time, to be a ſteddy ſuffering party is an honor they may flatter themſelves with very juſtly. Thus, they continue ſteddy to engagements which moſt of them wiſh in their hearts they had never taken; and ſuffer for principles, in ſupport of which not one of them would venture further, than talking the treaſon that claret inſpires.

It reſults, therefore, from all that has been ſaid, and from the reflections which theſe hints may ſuggeſt, that in whatever light we view the divided ſtate of a people, there is none in which theſe diviſions will appear incurable, nor an union of the members of a great community with one another, and with their head, unattainable. It may happen in this caſe as it does in many others, that things uncommon may paſs for improbable or impoſſible: and, as nothing can be more uncommon than a Patriot King, there will be no room to wonder if the natural and certain effects of his conduct ſhould appear improbable or impoſſible to many. But there is ſtill ſomething more in this caſe. Tho the union we ſpeak of be ſo much for the intereſt of every king and every people, that their glory and their proſperity muſt in-

creaſe, or diminiſh, in proportion as they approach nearer to it, or are further removed from it; yet is there another intereſt, by which princes and people both are often impoſed upon ſo far, as to miſtake it for their own. The intereſt I mean, is that of private ambition. It would be eaſy to ſhew in many inſtances, and particularly in this, of uniting inſtead of dividing, and of governing by a national concurrence inſtead of governing by the management of parties and factions in the ſtate, how widely different, nay how repugnant, the intereſts of private ambition and thoſe of real patriotiſm are. Men, therefore, who are warmed by the firſt, and have no ſenſe of the laſt, will declare for diviſion, as they do for corruption, in oppoſition to union and to integrity of government. They will not indeed declare directly, that the two former are in the abſtract preferable; but they will affirm, with great airs of ſufficiency, that both are incurable; and conclude from hence, that in practice it is neceſſary to comply with both. This ſubterfuge once open, there is no falſe and immoral meaſure, in political management, which may not be avowed and recommended. But the very men, who hope to eſcape by opening it, ſhut it up again, and ſecure their own condemnation, when they labor to confirm diviſions, and to propagate corruption, and thereby to create the very neceſſity that they plead in their excuſe. Neceſſity of this kind there is in reality none; for it ſeems full as abſurd to ſay, that popular diviſions muſt be cultivated, becauſe popular union cannot be procured, as it would be to ſay that poiſon muſt be poured into a wound, becauſe it cannot be healed. The practice of morality, in private life, will never arrive at ideal perfection: muſt we give up ourſelves, therefore, to all manner of immorality? and muſt thoſe who are charged with our inſtruction endeavor to make us the moſt profligate of men, becauſe they cannot make us ſaints?

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EXPERIENCE of the depravity of human nature made men deſirous to unite in ſociety and under government, that they might defend themſelves the better againſt injuries: but the ſame depravity ſoon inſpired to ſome the deſign of employing ſocieties to invade and ſpoil ſocieties; and to diſturb the peace of the great common-wealth of mankind, with more force and effect in ſuch collective bodies, than they could do individually. Juſt ſo it happens in the domeſtic œconomy of particular ſtates: and their peace is diſturbed by the ſame paſſions. Some of their members content themſelves with the common benefits of ſociety, and employ all their induſtry to promote the public good: but ſome propoſe to themſelves a ſeparate intereſt; and, that they may purſue it the more effectually, they aſſociate with others. Thus factions are in them, what nations are in the world; they invade and rob one another: and, while each purſues a ſeparate intereſt, the common intereſt is ſacrificed by them all: that of mankind in one caſe, that of ſome particular community in the other. This has been, and muſt always be, in ſome meaſure, the courſe of human affairs, eſpecially in free countries, where the paſſions of men are leſs reſtrained by authority: and I am not wild enough to ſuppoſe that a PATRIOT KING can change human nature. But I am reaſonable enough to ſuppoſe, that, without altering human nature, he may give a check to this courſe of human affairs, in his own kingdom at leaſt; that he may defeat the deſigns, and break the ſpirit of faction, inſtead of partaking in one, and aſſuming the other; and that, if he cannot render the union of his ſubjects univerſal, he may render it ſo general as to anſwer all the ends of good government, private ſecurity, public tranquillity, wealth, power, and fame.

If theſe ends were ever anſwered, they were ſo, ſurely, in this country, in the days of our Elizabeth. She found her kingdoms full of factions, and factions of another conſequence and danger than theſe of our days, whom ſhe would have diſperſed with a puff of her breath. She could not re-unite them, it is true: the papiſt continued a papiſt, the puritan a puritan; one furious, the other ſullen. But ſhe united the great body of the people in her and their common intereſt, ſhe inflamed them with one national ſpirit: and, thus armed, ſhe maintained tranquillity at home, and carried ſuccour to her friends and terror to her enemies abroad. There were cabals at her court, and intrigues among her miniſters. It is ſaid too, that ſhe did not diſlike that there ſhould be ſuch. But theſe were kept within her court. They could not creep abroad, to ſow diviſion among her people: and her greateſt favorite the earl of Essex paid the price of attempting it with his head. Let our great doctors in politics, who preach ſo learnedly on the trite text "Divide et impera," compare the conduct of Elizabeth in this reſpect with that of her ſucceſſor, who endeavoured to govern his kingdom by the notions of a faction that he raiſed, and to manage his parliament by undertakers: and they muſt be very obſtinate indeed, if they refuſe to acknowledge, that a wiſe and good prince can unite a divided people, tho a weak and wicked prince cannot; and that the conſequences of national union are glory and happineſs to the prince and to the people; whilſt thoſe of diſ-union bring ſhame and miſery on both, and entail, them too on poſterity.

I have dwelt long on the laſt head, not only becauſe it is of great importance in itſelf, and at all times, but becauſe it is rendered more ſo than ever at this time, by the unex-

ampled avowal of contrary principles. Hitherto it has been thought the higheſt pitch of profligacy to own, inſtead of concealing, crimes; and to take pride in them, inſtead of being aſhamed of them. But in our age men have ſoared to a pitch ſtill higher. The firſt is common, it is the practice of numbers, and by their numbers they keep one another in countenance. But the choice ſpirits of theſe days, the men of mode in politics, are far from ſtopping where criminals of all kinds have ſtopt, when they have gone even to this point; for generally the moſt hardened of the inhabitants of Newgate do not go ſo far. The men I ſpeak of contend, that it is not enough to be vicious by practice and habit, but that it is neceſſary to be ſo by principle. They make themſelves miſſionaries of faction as well as of corruption: they recommend both, they deride all ſuch as imagine it poſſible, or fit, to retain truth, integrity, and a diſintereſted regard to the public in public life, and pronounce every man a fool who is not ready to act like a knave. I hope that enough has been ſaid, tho much more might have been ſaid, to expoſe the wickedneſs of theſe men, and the abſurdity of their ſchemes; and to ſhew that a PATRIOT KING may walk more eaſily and ſucceſsfully in other paths of government, "per tutum pla-" numque iter religionis, juſtitiae, honeſtatis, virtutumque mo-" ralium." Let me proceed, therefore, to mention two other heads of the conduct that ſuch a king will hold, and it ſhall be my endeavor not to fall into the ſame prolixity.

A KING who eſteems it his duty to ſupport, or to reſtore, if that be needful, the free conſtitution of a limited monarchy; who forms and maintains a wiſe and good adminiſtration; who ſubdues faction, and promotes the union of his people: and who makes their greateſt good the conſtant object of his government, may be ſaid, no doubt, to be

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in the true intereſt of his kingdom. All the particular caſes, that can ariſe, are included in theſe general characteriſtics of a wiſe and good reign. And yet it ſeems proper to mention, under a diſtinct head, ſome particular inſtances that have not been touched, wherein this wiſdom and goodneſs will exert themſelves.

Now, tho the true intereſt of ſeveral ſtates may be the ſame in many reſpects, yet is there always ſome difference to be perceived, by a diſcerning eye, both in theſe intereſts, and in the manner of purſuing them; a difference that ariſes from the ſituation of countries, from the character of people, from the nature of government, and even from that of climate and ſoil; from circumſtances that are, like theſe, permanent, and from others that may be deemed more accidental. To illuſtrate all this by examples, would be eaſy, but long. I ſhall content myſelf therefore to mention, in ſome inſtances only, the difference that ariſes, from the cauſes referred to, between the true intereſt of our country, and that of ſome or all our neighbours on the continent: and leave others to extend and apply in their own thoughts the compariſon I ſhall hint at, rather than enlarge upon.

The ſituation of Great Britain, the character of her people, and the nature of her government, fit her for trade and commerce. Her climate and her ſoil make them neceſſary to her well-being. By trade and commerce we grow a rich and powerful nation, and by their decay we are growing poor and impotent. As trade and commerce enrich, ſo they fortify, our country. The ſea is our barrier, ſhips are our fortreſſes, and the mariners, that trade and commerce alone can furniſh, are the garriſons to defend them. France lies under great diſadvantages in trade and commerce, by the nature of her

government. Her advantages, in ſituation, are as great at leaſt as ours. Thoſe that ariſe, from the temper and character of her people, are a little different perhaps, and yet upon the whole equivalent. Thoſe of her climate and her ſoil are ſuperior to ours, and indeed to thoſe of any European nation. The United Provinces have the ſame advantages that we have in the nature of their government, more perhaps in the temper and character of their people, leſs to be ſure in their ſituation, climate, and ſoil. But, without deſcending into a longer detail of the advantages and diſadvantages attending each of theſe nations in trade and commerce, it is ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe to obſerve, that Great Britain ſtands in a certain middle between the other two, with regard to wealth and power ariſing from theſe ſprings. A leſs, and a leſs conſtant, application to the improvement of theſe may ſerve the ends of France; a greater is neceſſary in this country; and a greater ſtill in Holland. The French may improve their natural wealth and power by the improvement of trade and commerce. We can have no wealth, nor power by conſequence, as Europe is now conſtituted, without the improvement of them, nor in any degree but proportionably to this improvement. The Dutch cannot ſubſiſt without them. They bring wealth to other nations, and are neceſſary to the well-being of them; but they ſupply the Dutch with food and raiment, and are neceſſary even to their being.

The reſult of what has been ſaid is, in general, that the wealth and power of all nations depending ſo much on their trade and commerce, and every nation being, like the three I have mentioned, in ſuch different circumſtances of advantage or diſadvantage in the purſuit of this common intereſt; a good government, and therefore the government of

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a PATRIOT KING, will be directed conſtantly to make the moſt of every advantage that nature has given, or art can procure, towards the improvement of trade and commerce. And this is one of the principal criterions by which we are to judge, whether governors are in the true intereſt of the people or not.

IT reſults, in particular, that Great Britain might improve her wealth and power in a proportion ſuperior to that of any nation who can be deemed her rival, if the advantages ſhe has were as wiſely cultivated, as they will be in the reign of a PATRIOT KING. To be convinced more thoroughly of this truth, a very ſhort proceſs of reaſoning will ſuffice. Let any man, who has knowledge enough for it, firſt compare the natural ſtate of Great Britain, and of the United Provinces, and then their artificial ſtate together; that is, let him conſider minutely the advantages we have by the ſituation, extent, and nature of our iſland, over the inhabitants of a few ſalt marſhes gained on the ſea, and hardly defended from it: and after that, let him conſider how nearly theſe provinces have raiſed themſelves to an equality of wealth and power with the kingdom of Great Britain. From whence ariſes this difference of improvement? It ariſes plainly from hence: the Dutch have been, from the foundation of their commonwealth, a nation of patriots and merchants. The ſpirit of that people has not been diverted from theſe two objects, the defence of their liberty, and the improvement of their trade and commerce: which have been carried on by them with uninterrupted and unſlackened application, induſtry, order, and œconomy. In Great Britain the caſe has not been the ſame, in either reſpect; but here we confine ourſelves to ſpeak of the laſt alone.

TRADE

TRADE and commerce, ſuch as they were in thoſe days, had been ſometimes, and in ſome inſtances, before the reign of Queen ELIZABETH, encouraged and improved: but the great encouragements were given, the great extenſions and improvements were made, by that glorious princeſs. To her we owe that ſpirit of domeſtic and foreign trade which is not quite extinguiſhed. It was ſhe who gave that rapid motion to our whole mercantile ſyſtem which is not entirely ceaſed. They both flagged under her ſucceſſor; were not revived under his ſon; were checked, diverted, clogged, and interrupted, during our civil wars: and began to exert new vigor after the reſtoration, in a long courſe of peace; but met with new difficulties, too, from the confirmed rivalry of the Dutch, and the growing rivalry of the French. To one of theſe the puſillanimous character of JAMES the firſt gave many ſcandalous occaſions: and the other was favored by the conduct of CHARLES the ſecond, who never was in the true intereſt of the people he governed. From the revolution to the death of queen ANNE, however trade and commerce might be aided and encouraged in other reſpects, they were neceſſarily ſubjected to depredations abroad, and overloaded by taxes at home, during the courſe of two great wars. From the acceſſion of the late king to this hour, in the midſt of a full peace, the debts of the nation continue much the ſame, the taxes have been increaſed, and for eighteen years of this time we have tamely ſuffered continual depredations from the moſt contemptible maritime power in Europe, that of Spain.

A PATRIOT KING will neither neglect, nor ſacrifice his country's intereſt. No other intereſt, neither a foreign nor a domeſtic, neither a public nor a private, will influence his conduct in government. He will not multiply taxes wan-

tonly, nor keep up thoſe unneceſſarily which neceſſity has laid, that he may keep up legions of tax-gatherers. He will not continue national debts, by all ſorts of political and other profuſion; nor, more wickedly ſtill, by a ſettled purpoſe of oppreſſing and impoveriſhing the people; that he may with greater eaſe corrupt ſome, and govern the whole, according to the dictates of his paſſions and arbitrary will. To give eaſe and encouragement to manufactory at home, to aſſiſt and protect trade abroad, to improve and keep in heart the national colonies, like ſo many farms of the mother country, will be principal and conſtant parts of the attention of ſuch a prince. The wealth of the nation he will moſt juſtly eſteem to be his wealth, the power his power, the ſecurity and the honor, his ſecurity and honor; and, by the very means by which he promotes the two firſt, he will wiſely preſerve the two laſt; for by theſe means, and by theſe alone, can the great advantage of the ſituation of this kingdom be taken and improved.

Great Britain is an iſland: and, whilſt nations on the continent are at immenſe charge in maintaining their barriers, and perpetually on their guard, and frequently embroiled, to extend or ſtrengthen them, Great Britain may, if her governors pleaſe, accumulate wealth in maintaining hers; make herſelf ſecure from invaſions, and be ready to invade others when her own immediate intereſt, or the general intereſt of Europe, requires it. Of all which queen Elizabeth's reign is a memorable example, and undeniable proof. I ſaid the general intereſt of Europe; becauſe it ſeems to me that this, alone, ſhould call our councils off from an almoſt entire application to their domeſtic and proper buſineſs. Other nations muſt watch over every motion of their neighbours; penetrate if they can, every deſign; foreſee every minute event; and take

take part by ſome engagement or other in almoſt every conjuncture that ariſes. But as we cannot be eaſily nor ſuddenly attacked, and as we ought not to aim at any acquiſition of territory on the continent, it may be our intereſt to watch the ſecret workings of the ſeveral councils abroad; to adviſe, and warn; to abet, and oppoſe; but it never can be our true intereſt eaſily and officiouſly to enter into action, much leſs into engagements that imply action and expence. Other nations, like the Velites or light-armed troops, ſtand foremoſt in the field, and ſkirmiſh perpetually. When a great war begins, we ought to look on the powers of the continent, to whom we incline, like the two firſt lines, the Principes and Haſtati of a Roman army: and on ourſelves, like the Triarii, that are not to charge with theſe legions on every occaſion, but to be ready for the conflict whenever the fortune of the day, be it ſooner or later, calls us to it, and the ſum of things, or the general intereſt, makes it neceſſary.

THIS is that poſt of advantage and honor, which our ſingular ſituation among the powers of Europe determines us, or ſhould determine us, to take, in all diſputes that happen on the continent. If we neglect it, and diſſipate our ſtrength on occaſions that touch us remotely or indirectly, we are governed by men who do not know the true intereſt of this iſland, or who have ſome other intereſt more at heart. If we adhere to it, ſo at leaſt as to deviate little and ſeldom from it, as we ſhall do whenever we are wiſely and honeſtly governed, then will this nation make her proper figure: and a great one it will be. By a continual attention to improve her natural, that is her maritime ſtrength, by collecting all her forces within herſelf, and reſerving them to be laid out on great occaſions, ſuch as regard her immediate intereſts and her honor, or ſuch as are truly important to the general ſyſtem

of power in Europe; ſhe may be the arbitrator of differences, the guardian of liberty, and the preſerver of that balance, which has been ſo much talked of, and is ſo little underſtood.

"ARE we never to be ſoldiers?" it will be ſaid. Yes, conſtantly, in ſuch proportion as is neceſſary for the defence of good government. To eſtabliſh ſuch a military force as none but bad governors can want, is to eſtabliſh tyrannical power in the king or in the miniſters; and may be wanted by the latter, when the former would be ſecure without his army, if he broke his miniſter. Occaſionally too we muſt be ſoldiers, and for offence as well as defence; but in proportion to the nature of the conjuncture, conſidered always relatively to the difference here inſiſted upon between our ſituation, our intereſt, and the nature of our ſtrength, compared with thoſe of the other powers of Europe; and not in proportion to the deſires, or even to the wants, of the nations with whom we are confederated. Like other amphibious animals, we muſt come occaſionally on ſhore: but the water is more properly our element, and in it, like them, as we find our greateſt ſecurity, ſo we exert our greateſt force.

WHAT I touch upon here, very ſhortly, deſerves to be conſidered, and re-conſidered, by every man who has, or may have, any ſhare in the government of Great Britain. For we have not only departed too much from our true national intereſt in this reſpect; but we have done ſo with the general applauſe even of well-meaning men, who did not diſcern that we waſted ourſelves by an improper application of our ſtrength in conjunctures when we might have ſerved the common cauſe far more uſefully, nay with entire effect, by a proper application of our natural ſtrength. There was ſome-

ſomething more than this. Armies grew ſo much into faſhion, in time of war, among men who meant well to their country, that they who mean ill to it have kept, and keep them ſtill up in the profoundeſt peace: and the number of our ſoldiers, in this iſland alone, is almoſt double to that of our ſeamen. That they are kept up againſt foreign enemies, cannot be ſaid with any color. If they are kept for ſhew, they are ridiculous; if they are kept for any other purpoſe whatever, they are too dangerous to be ſuffered. A PATRIOT KING, ſeconded by miniſters attached to the true intereſt of their country, would ſoon reform this abuſe, and ſave a great part of this expence; or apply it, in a manner preferable even to the ſaving it, to the maintenance of a body of marine foot, and to the charge of a regiſter of thirty or forty thouſand ſeamen. But no thoughts like theſe, no great deſigns for the honor and intereſt of the kingdom, will be entertained, till men who have this honor and intereſt at heart ariſe to power.

I COME now to the laſt head under which I ſhall conſider the character and conduct of a PATRIOT KING: and let it not be thought to be of the leaſt importance, tho it may ſeem, at the firſt mention, to concern appearances rather than realities, and to be nothing more than a circumſtance contained in or implied by the great parts of the character and conduct of ſuch a king. It is of his perſonal behaviour, of his manner of living with other men, and, in a word, of his private as well as public life that I mean to ſpeak. It is of that decency and grace, that bienſeance of the French, that decorum of the Latins, that πρεπον of the Greeks, which can never be reflected on any character that is not laid in virtue: but for want of which, a character that is ſo laid will loſe, at all times, part of the luſtre belonging to it, and may be ſometimes not a little miſunderſtood and undervalued. Beauty is not ſeparable from health, nor this luſtre, ſaid the Stoics,

from virtue: but as a man may be healthful without being handſome, ſo he may be virtuous without being amiable.

THERE are certain finiſhing ſtrokes, a laſt hand as we commonly ſay, to be given to all the works of art. When that is not given, we may ſee the excellency of a general deſign, and the beauty of ſome particular parts. A judge of the art may ſee further; he may allow for what is wanting, and diſcern the full merit of a complete work in one that is imperfect. But vulgar eyes will not be ſo ſtruck. The work will appear to them defective, becauſe unfiniſhed: ſo that without knowing preciſely what they diſlike, they may admire, but they will not be pleaſed. Thus in moral characters, tho every part be virtuous and great, or tho the few and ſmall defects in it be concealed under the blaze of thoſe ſhining qualities that compenſate for them; yet is not this enough even in private life: it is leſs ſo in public life, and ſtill leſs ſo in that of a prince.

THERE is a certain "ſpecies liberalis," more eaſily underſtood than explained, and felt than defined, that muſt be acquired and rendered habitual to him. A certain propriety of words and actions, that reſults from their conformity to nature and character, muſt always accompany him, and create an air and manner that run uniformly thro the whole tenor of his conduct and behaviour: which air and manner are ſo far from any kind or degree of affectation, that they cannot be attained except by him who is void of all affectation. We may illuſtrate this to ourſelves, and make it more ſenſible, by reflecting on the conduct of good dramatic or epic writers. They draw the characters, which they bring on the ſcene, from nature, they ſuſtain them thro the whole piece, and make their actors neither ſay nor do any thing that is not exactly proper to the character each of them repreſents. "Oderint dum me-

"tuant," came properly out of the mouth of a tyrant; but EURIPIDES would never have put that execrable ſentence into the mouth of MINOS or ÆACUS.

A MAN of ſenſe and virtue both will not fall into any great impropriety of character, or indecency of conduct: but he may ſlide or be ſurpriſed into ſmall ones, from a thouſand reaſons, and in a thouſand manners, which I ſhall not ſtay to enumerate. Againſt theſe, therefore, even men, who are incapable of falling into the others, muſt be ſtill on their guard, and no men ſo much as princes. When their minds are filled and their hearts warmed with true notions of government, when they know their duty, and love their people, they will not fail in the great parts they are to act, in the council, in the field, and in all the arduous affairs that belong to their kingly office: at leaſt they will not begin to fail, by failing in them. But as they are men ſuſceptible of the ſame impreſſions, liable to the ſame errors, and expoſed to the ſame paſſions, ſo they are likewiſe expoſed to more and ſtronger temptations than others. Beſides, the elevation in which they are placed, as it gives them great advantages, gives them great diſadvantages too, that often countervail the former. Thus, for inſtance, a little merit in a prince is ſeen and felt by numbers: it is multiplied, as it were, and in proportion to this effect his reputation is raiſed by it. But then, a little failing is ſeen and felt by numbers too: it is multiplied in the ſame manner, and his reputation ſinks in the ſame proportion.

I SPOKE above of defects that may be concealed under the blaze of great and ſhining qualities. This may be the caſe: it has been that of ſome princes. There goes a tradition that HENRY the fourth of France aſked a Spaniſh ambaſſador, what

what miſtreſſes the king of Spain had? The ambaſſador replied, like a formal pedant, that his maſter was a prince who feared God, and had no miſtreſs but the queen. HENRY the fourth felt the reflection, and aſked him in return, with ſome contempt, "Whether his maſter had not virtues enough "to cover one vice?"

THE faults or defects, that may be thus covered or compenſated, are, I think, thoſe of the man, rather than thoſe of the king; ſuch as ariſe from conſtitution, and the natural rather than the moral character; ſuch as may be deemed accidental ſtarts of paſſion, or accidental remiſſineſs in ſome unguarded hours; ſurpriſes, if I may ſay ſo, of the man on the king. When theſe happen ſeldom, and paſs ſoon, they may be hid like ſpots in the ſun: but they are ſpots ſtill. He who has the means of ſeeing them, will ſee them: and he who has not, may feel the effects of them without knowing preciſely the cauſe. When they continue (for here is the danger, becauſe, if they continue, they will increaſe) they are ſpots no longer: they ſpread a general ſhade, and obſcure the light in which they were drowned before. The virtues of the king are loſt in the vices of the man.

ALEXANDER had violent paſſions, and thoſe for wine and women were predominant, after his ambition. They were ſpots in his character before they prevailed by the force of habit: as ſoon as they began to do ſo, the king and the hero appeared leſs, the rake and bully more. Perſepolis was burnt at the inſtigation of THAIS, and CLYTUS was killed in a drunken brawl. He repented indeed of theſe two horrible actions, and was again the king and hero upon many occaſions; but he had not been enough on his guard, when the ſtrongeſt incitements to vanity and to ſenſual pleaſures offered themſelves

themſelves at every moment to him: and, when he ſtood in all his eaſy hours ſurrounded by women and eunuchs, by the pandars, paraſites, and buffoons of a voluptuous court, they, who could not approach the king, approached the man, and by ſeducing the man, they betrayed the king. His faults became habits. The Macedonians, who did not or would not ſee the one, ſaw the other; and he fell a ſacrifice to their reſentments, to their fears, and to thoſe factions that will ariſe under an odious government, as well as under one that grows into contempt.

OTHER characters might be brought to contraſte with this; the firſt SCIPIO AFRICANUS, for example, or the eldeſt CATO: and there will be no objection to a compariſon of ſuch citizens of Rome, as theſe were, with kings of the firſt magnitude. Now the reputation of the firſt SCIPIO was not ſo clear and uncontroverted in private as in public life; nor was he allow'd by all, to be a man of ſuch ſevere virtue, as he affected, and as that age required. NAEVIUS was thought to mean him in ſome verſes GELLIUS has preſerved: and VALERIUS ANTIAS made no ſcruple to aſſert, that, far from reſtoring the fair Spaniard to her family, he debauched and kept her. Notwithſtanding this, what authority did he not maintain? In what eſteem and veneration did he not live and die? With what panegyrics has not the whole torrent of writers rolled down his reputation even to theſe days? This could not have happened, if the vice imputed to him had ſhewn itſelf in any ſcandalous appearances, to eclipſe the luſtre of the general, the conſul, or the citizen. The ſame reflection might be extended to CATO, who loved wine as well as SCIPIO loved women. Men did not judge in the days of the elder CATO perhaps, as SENECA was ready to do in thoſe of the younger, that drunkeneſs could be no crime if CATO drank:

but CATO's paſſion, as well as that of SCIPIO, was ſubdued and kept under by his public character. His virtue warmed, inſtead of cooling, by this indulgence to his genius or natural temper: and one may gather, from what TULLY puts into his mouth, in the treatiſe concerning Old age, that even his love of wine was rendered ſubſervient, inſtead of doing hurt, to the meaſures he purſued in his public character.

GIVE me leave to inſiſt a little on the two firſt CAESARS, and on MARC ANTONY. I quote none of them as good men, but I may quote them all as great men, and therefore properly in this place; ſince a PATRIOT KING muſt avoid the defects that diminiſh a great character, as well as thoſe that corrupt a good one. Old CURIO called JULIUS CAESAR the huſband of every wife, and the wife of every huſband; referring to his known adulteries, and to the compliances that he was ſuſpected of in his youth for NICOMEDES. Even his own ſoldiers, in the licence of a triumph, ſung lampoons on him for his profuſion as well as lewdneſs. The youth of AUGUSTUS was defamed as much as that of JULIUS CAESAR, and both as much as that of ANTONY. When Rome was ranſacked by the pandars of AUGUSTUS, and matrons and virgins were ſtripped and ſearched, like ſlaves in a market, to chuſe the fitteſt to ſatisfy his luſt, did ANTONY do more? When JULIUS ſet no bounds to his debauches in Egypt, except thoſe that ſatiety impoſed, "poſtquam epulis bacchoque modum laſſata voluptas impoſuit," when he trifled away his time with CLEOPATRA in the very criſis of the civil war, and till his troops refuſed to follow him any further in his effeminate progreſs up the Nile—did ANTONY do more? No; all three had vices which would have been ſo little borne in any former age of Rome, that no man could have raiſed himſelf, under the weight of them, to popularity and to power. But we muſt

not wonder that the people, who bore the tyrants, bore the libertines; nor that indulgence was ſhewn to the vices of the great, in a city where univerſal corruption and profligacy of manners were eſtabliſhed: and yet even in this city, and among theſe degenerate Romans, certain it is, that different appearances, with the ſame vices, helped to maintain the CAESARS, and ruined ANTONY. I might produce many anecdotes to ſhew how the two former ſaved appearances whilſt their vices were the moſt flagrant, and made ſo much amends for the appearances they had not ſaved, by thoſe of a contrary kind, that a great part at leaſt of all which was ſaid to defame them might paſs, and did paſs, for the calumny of party.

BUT ANTONY threw off all decorum from the firſt, and continued to do ſo to the laſt. Not only vice, but indecency became habitual to him. He ceaſed to be a general, a conſul, a triumvir, a citizen of Rome. He became an Egyptian king, ſunk into luxurious effeminacy, and proved he was unfit to govern men, by ſuffering himſelf to be governed by a woman. His vices hurt him, but his habits ruined him. If a political modeſty at leaſt had made him diſguiſe the firſt, they would have hurt him leſs, and he might have eſcaped the laſt: but he was ſo little ſenſible of this, that in a fragment of one of his letters to AUGUSTUS, which SUETONIUS has preſerved, he endeavors to juſtify himſelf by pleading this very habit. "What matter is it whom we lie with?" ſays he: "this letter may find you perhaps with TERTULLA, or TERENTILIA," or others that he names. "I lie with CLEOPATRA, "and have I not done ſo theſe nine years?"

THESE great examples, which I have produced, not to encourage vice, but to ſhew more ſtrongly the advantages of decency in private behavior, may appear in ſome ſort figures

bigger than the life. Few virtues and few vices grow up, in theſe parts of the world and theſe latter ages, to the ſize of thoſe I have mentioned; and none have ſuch ſcenes wherein to exert themſelves. But the truths I am deſirous to inculcate will be as juſtly delivered in this manner, and perhaps more ſtrongly felt. Failings or vices that flow from the ſame ſource of human nature, that run the ſame courſe thro the conduct of princes, and have the ſame effects on their characters, and conſequently on their government and their fortune, have all the proportion neceſſary to my application of them. It matters little, whether a prince, who abandons that common decorum which reſults from nature and which reaſon preſcribes, abandons the particular decorums of this country or that, of this age or that, which reſult from mode, and which cuſtom exacts. It matters little, for inſtance, whether a prince gives himſelf up to the more groſs luxury of the weſt, or to the more refined luxury of the eaſt; whether he become the ſlave of a domeſtic harlot, or of a foreign queen; in ſhort whether he forget himſelf in the arms of one whore or of twenty; and whether he imitate ANTONY, or a king of Achin, who is reported to have paſſed his whole time in a ſeraglio, eating, drinking, chewing betel, playing with women, and talking of cock-fighting.

To ſum up the whole and draw to a concluſion: this decency, this grace, this propriety of manners to character, is ſo eſſential to princes in particular, that whenever it is neglected, their virtues loſe a great degree of luſtre, and their defects acquire much aggravation. Nay more; by neglecting this decency and this grace, and for want of a ſufficient regard to appearances, even their virtues may betray them into failings, their failings into vices, and their vices into habits unworthy of princes and unworthy of men.

THE

The conſtitutions of governments, and the different tempers and characters of people, may be thought juſtly to deſerve ſome conſideration, in determining the behavior of princes in private life as well as in public; and to put a difference, for inſtance, between the decorum of a king of France, and that of a king of Great Britain.

Lewis the fourteenth was king in an abſolute monarchy, and reigned over a people whoſe genius makes it as fit perhaps to impoſe on them by admiration and awe, as to gain and hold them by affection. Accordingly he kept great ſtate; was haughty, was reſerved; and all he ſaid or did appeared to be forethought and planned. His regard to appearances was ſuch, that when his miſtreſs was the wife of another man, and he had children by her every year, he endeavored to cover her conſtant reſidence at court by a place ſhe filled about the queen: and he dined and ſupped and cohabited with the latter in every apparent reſpect as if he had had no miſtreſs at all. Thus he raiſed a great reputation; he was revered by his ſubjects, and admired by his neighbours: and this was due principally to the art with which he managed appearances, ſo as to ſet off his virtues, to diſguiſe his failings and his vices, and by his example and authority to keep a veil drawn over the futility and debauch of his court.

His ſucceſſor, not to the throne, but to the ſovereign power, was a mere rake, with ſome wit, and no morals; nay, with ſo little regard to them, that he made them a ſubject of ridicule in diſcourſe, and appeared in his whole conduct more profligate, if that could be, than he was in principle. The difference between theſe characters ſoon appeared in abominable effects; ſuch as, cruelty apart, might recal the memory

of NERO, or, in the other ſex, that of MESSALINA, and ſuch as I leave the chroniclers of ſcandal to relate.

OUR ELIZABETH was queen in a limited monarchy, and reigned over a people at all times more eaſily led than driven; and at that time capable of being attached to their prince and their country, by a more generous principle than any of thoſe which prevail in our days, by affection. There was a ſtrong prerogative then in being, and the crown was in poſſeſſion of greater legal power. Popularity was, however, then, as it is now, and as it muſt be always in mixed government, the ſole true foundation of that ſufficient authority and influence, which other conſtitutions give the prince gratis, and independently of the people, but which a king of this nation muſt acquire. The wiſe queen ſaw it, and ſhe ſaw too, how much popularity depends on thoſe appearances, that depend on the decorum, the decency, the grace, and the propriety of behavior of which we are ſpeaking. A warm concern for the intereſt and honor of the nation, a tenderneſs for her people, and a confidence in their affections, were appearances that ran thro her whole public conduct, and gave life and color to it. She did great things, and ſhe knew how to ſet them off according to their full value, by her manner of doing them. In her private behavior ſhe ſhewed great affability, ſhe deſcended even to familiarity; but her familiarity was ſuch as could not be imputed to her weakneſs, and was, therefore, moſt juſtly aſcribed to her goodneſs. Tho a woman, ſhe hid all that was womaniſh about her: and if a few equivocal marks of coquetry appeared on ſome occaſions, they paſſed like flaſhes of lightning, vaniſhed as ſoon as they were diſcerned, and imprinted no blot on her character. She had private friendſhips, ſhe had favorites: but ſhe never ſuf-

fered

fered her friends to forget ſhe was their queen; and when her favorites did, ſhe made them feel that ſhe was ſo.

HER ſucceſſor had no virtues to ſet off, but he had failings and vices to conceal. He could not conceal the latter; and, void of the former, he could not compenſate for them. His failings and his vices therefore ſtanding in full view, he paſſed for a weak prince and an ill man; and fell into all the contempt wherein his memory remains to this day. The methods he took, to preſerve himſelf from it, ſerved but to confirm him in it. No man can keep the decorum of manners in life, who is not free from every kind of affectation, as it has been ſaid already: but he who affects what he has no pretenſions to, or what is improper to his character and rank in the world, is guilty of moſt conſummate folly; he becomes doubly ungracious, doubly indecent, and quite ridiculous. JAMES the firſt, not having one quality to conciliate the eſteem or affection of his people to him, endeavored to impoſe on their underſtandings; and to create a reſpect for himſelf, by ſpreading the moſt extravagant notions about kings in general, as if they were middle beings between GOD and other men; and by comparing the extent and unſearchable myſteries of their power and prerogative to thoſe of the divine providence. His language and his behavior were commonly ſuited to ſuch fooliſh pretenſions; and thus, by aſſuming a claim to ſuch reſpect and ſubmiſſion as were not due to him, he loſt a great part of what was due to him. In ſhort, he begun at the wrong end; for tho the ſhining qualities of the king may cover ſome failings and ſome vices that do not grow up to ſtrong habits in the man, yet muſt the character of a great and good king be founded in that of a great and good man. A king who lives out of the ſight of his ſubjects, or is never ſeen by them except on his throne, can ſcarce be deſpiſed as a man, tho he may be hated as a king. But the king who lives more in their ſight, and

more

more under their obſervation, may be deſpiſed before he is hated, and even without being hated. This happened to king JAMES: a thouſand circumſtances brought it to paſs, and none more than the indecent weakneſſes he had for his minions. He did not endeavor to cure this contempt and raiſe his character, only by affecting what he had no pretenſions to, as in the former caſe; but he endeavored likewiſe moſt vainly to do it by affecting what was improper to his character and rank. He did not endeavor indeed to diſguiſe his natural puſillanimity and timidity under the maſk of a bully, whilſt he was impoſed upon and inſulted by all his neighbours, and above all by the Spaniards; but he retailed the ſcraps of BUCHANAN, affected to talk much, figured in church controverſies, and put on all the pedantic appearances of a ſcholar, whilſt he neglected all thoſe of a great and good man, as well as king.

LET not princes flatter themſelves. They will be examined cloſely, in private as well as in public life: and thoſe, who cannot pierce further, will judge of them by the appearances they give in both. To obtain true popularity, that which is founded in eſteem and affection, they muſt, therefore, maintain their characters in both; and to that end neglect appearances in neither, but obſerve the decorum neceſſary to preſerve the eſteem, whilſt they win the affections, of mankind. Kings, they muſt never forget that they are men: men, they muſt never forget that they are kings. The ſentiments, which one of theſe reflections of courſe inſpires, will give a humane and affable air to their whole behavior, and make them taſte in that high elevation all the joys of ſocial life. The ſentiments, that the other reflection ſuggeſts, will be found very compatible with the former: and they may never forget that they are kings, tho they do not always carry the crown on their heads, nor the ſceptre in their hands. Vanity and folly

muſt entrench themſelves in a conſtant affectation of ſtate, to preſerve regal dignity: a wiſe prince will know how to preſerve it when he lays his majeſty aſide. He will dare to appear a private man, and in that character he will draw to himſelf a reſpect leſs oſtentatious, but more real and more pleaſing to him, than any which is paid to the monarch. By never ſaying what is unfit for him to ſay, he will never hear what is unfit for him to hear. By never doing what is unfit for him to do, he will never ſee what is unfit for him to ſee. Decency and propriety of manners are ſo far from leſſening the pleaſures of life, that they refine them, and give them an higher taſte: they are ſo far from reſtraining the free and eaſy commerce of ſocial life, that they baniſh the bane of it, licentiouſneſs of behaviour. Ceremony is the barrier againſt this abuſe of liberty in public; politeneſs and decency are ſo in private: and the prince, who practiſes and exacts them, will amuſe himſelf much better, and oblige thoſe, who have the honor to be in his intimacy and to ſhare his pleaſures with him, much more, than he could poſſibly do by the moſt abſolute and unguarded familiarity.

That which is here recommended to princes, that conſtant guard on their own behavior even in private life, and that conſtant decorum which their example ought to exact from others, will not be found ſo difficult in practice as may be imagined; if they uſe a proper diſcernment in the choice of the perſons whom they admit to the neareſt degrees of intimacy with them. A prince ſhould chuſe his companions with as great care as his miniſters. If he truſts the buſineſs of his ſtate to theſe, he truſts his character to thoſe: and his character will depend on theirs much more than is commonly thought. General experience will lead men to judge that a ſimilitude of character determined the choice; even when chance,

indulgence to aſſiduity, good-nature, or want of reflection, had their ſhare in the introduction of men unworthy of ſuch favor. But, in ſuch caſes, certain it is that they, who judged wrong at firſt concerning him, will judge right at laſt. He is not a trifler, for inſtance. Be it ſo: but if he takes trifling futile creatures, men of mean characters, or of no character, into his intimacy, he ſhews a diſpoſition to become ſuch; and will become ſuch, unleſs he breaks theſe habits early, and before puerile amuſements are grown up to be the buſineſs of his life. I mean, that the minds of princes, like the minds of other men, will be brought down inſenſibly to the tone of the company they keep.

A WORSE conſequence, even than this, may follow a want of diſcernment in princes how to chuſe their companions, and how to conduct themſelves in private life. Silly kings have reſigned themſelves to their miniſters, have ſuffered theſe to ſtand between them and their people, and have formed no judgments, nor taken any meaſures on their own knowledge, but all implicitly on the repreſentations made to them by their miniſters. Kings of ſuperior capacity have reſigned themſelves in the ſame manner to their favorites, male and female, have ſuffered theſe to ſtand between them and their moſt able and faithful counſellors: their judgments have been influenced, and their meaſures directed by inſinuations of women, or of men as little fitted as women, by nature and education, to be harkened to, in the great affairs of government. Hiſtory is full of ſuch examples; all melancholy, many tragical! ſufficient, one would imagine, to deter princes, if attended to, from permitting the companions of their idle hours, or the inſtruments of their pleaſures, to exceed the bounds of thoſe provinces. Should a miniſter of ſtate pretend to vie with any of theſe, about the forms of a drawing room, the regulation of a ruelle, the

decoration of a ball, or the dreſs of a fine lady, he would be thought ridiculous, and he would be truly ſo. But then are not any of theſe impertinent, when they preſume to meddle in things at leaſt as much above them, as thoſe that have been mentioned are below the others? And are not princes, who ſuffer them to do ſo, unaccountably weak?

WHAT ſhall I ſay further on this head? Nothing more is neceſſary. Let me wind it up, therefore, by aſſerting this great truth, that reſults from what has been already ſaid: As he can never fill the character of a PATRIOT KING, tho his perſonal great and good qualities be in every other reſpect equal to it, who lies open to the flattery of courtiers, to the ſeduction of women, and to the partialities and affections which are eaſily contracted by too great indulgence in private life; ſo the prince, who is deſirous to eſtabliſh this character, muſt obſerve ſuch a decorum, and keep ſuch a guard on himſelf, as may prevent even the ſuſpicion of being liable to ſuch influences. For as the reality would ruin, the very ſuſpicion will leſſen him in the opinion of mankind: and the opinion of mankind, which is fame after death, is ſuperior ſtrength and power in life.

AND now, if the principles and meaſures of conduct, laid down in this diſcourſe, as neceſſary to conſtitute that greateſt and moſt glorious of human beings, a PATRIOT KING, be ſufficient to this purpoſe; let us conſider, too, how eaſy it is, or ought to be, to eſtabliſh them in the minds of princes. They are founded on true propoſitions, all of which are obvious, nay, many of them ſelf-evident. They are confirmed by univerſal experience. In a word, no underſtanding can reſiſt them, and none but the weakeſt can fail, or be miſled, in the application of them. To a prince, whoſe heart is cor-

rupt, it is in vain to ſpeak: and, for ſuch a prince, I would not be thought to write. But if the heart of a prince be not corrupt, theſe truths will find an eaſy ingreſſion, thro the underſtanding, to it. Let us conſider again, what the ſure, the neceſſary effects of ſuch principles and meaſures of conduct muſt be, to the prince, and to the people. On this ſubject let the imagination range thro the whole glorious ſcene of a patriot reign: the beauty of the idea will inſpire thoſe tranſports, which PLATO imagined the viſion of Virtue would inſpire, if Virtue could be ſeen. What in truth can be ſo lovely, what ſo venerable, as to contemplate a king on whom the eyes of a whole people are fixed, filled with admiration, and glowing with affection? A king, in the temper of whoſe government, like that of NERVA, things ſo ſeldom allied as empire and liberty are intimately mixed, co-exiſt together inſeparably, and conſtitute one real eſſence? What ſpectacle can be preſented to the view of the mind ſo rare, ſo nearly divine, as a king poſſeſſed of abſolute power, neither uſurped by fraud, nor maintained by force, but the genuine effect of eſteem, of confidence, and affection; the free gift of liberty, who finds her greateſt ſecurity in this power, and would deſire no other if the prince on the throne could be, what his people wiſh him to be, immortal? Of ſuch a prince, and of ſuch a prince alone, it may be ſaid with ſtrict propriety and truth,

" Volentes
" Per populos dat jura, viamque affectat Olympo."

Civil fury will have no place in this draught: or, if the monſter is ſeen, he muſt be ſeen as Virgil deſcribes him,

" Centum vinctus ahenis
" Poſt tergum nodis, fremit horridus ore cruento."

He muſt be ſeen ſubdued, bound, chained, and deprived entirely of power to do hurt. In his place, concord will appear, brooding peace and proſperity on the happy land; joy ſitting in every face, content in every heart; a people unoppreſſed, undiſturbed, unalarmed; buſy to improve their private property and the public ſtock; fleets covering the ocean, bringing home wealth by the returns of induſtry, carrying aſſiſtance or terror abroad by the direction of wiſdom, and aſſerting triumphantly the right and the honor of Great Britain, as far as waters roll and as winds can waft them.

THOSE who live to ſee ſuch happy days, and to act in ſo glorious a ſcene, will perhaps call to mind, with ſome tenderneſs of ſentiment, when he is no more, a man, who contributed his mite to carry on ſo good a work, and who deſired life for nothing ſo much, as to ſee a king of Great Britain the moſt popular man in his country, and a PATRIOT KING at the head of an united people.

OF

OF THE

STATE of PARTIES

At the ACCESSION of

King GEORGE the First.

OF THE

STATE of PARTIES

AT THE

Acceſſion of King GEORGE the Firſt.

I PERCEIVE by yours that my diſcourſe of the character and conduct of a PATRIOT KING, in that article which relates to party, has not entirely ſatisfied your expectations. You expected, from ſome things that I remember to have ſaid to you in converſation, and others that have fallen on that occaſion from my pen, a more particular application of thoſe general reaſonings to the preſent time, and to the ſtate of parties, from the late king's acceſſion to the throne. The ſubject is delicate enough, and yet I ſhall ſpeak upon it what truth exacts from me, with the utmoſt frankneſs: for I know all our parties too well, to eſteem any; and I am too old, and too reſigned to my fate, to want, or to fear any.

WHATEVER anecdotes you have been told, for you are too young to have ſeen the paſſages of the times I am going to mention, and whatever prepoſſeſſions you have had, take theſe

facts for undoubted truths: That there was no deſign on foot, during the four laſt years of queen ANNE's reign, to ſet aſide the ſucceſſion of the houſe of Hanover, and to place the crown on the head of the pretender to it; nor any party formed for this purpoſe at the time of the death of that princeſs, whoſe memory I honor, and therefore feel a juſt indignation at the irreverence with which we have ſeen it treated. If ſuch a deſign had been on foot, during that time, there were moments when the execution of it would not have been difficult, or dangerous enough, to have ſtopped men of the moſt moderate reſolution. Neither could a deſign of that nature have been carried on ſo long, tho it was not carried into execution, without leaving ſome traces, which would have appeared when ſuch ſtrict inquiſitions were made; when the papers of ſo many of the queen's ſervants were ſeized, and even her own papers, even thoſe ſhe had ſealed up to be burnt after her death, were expoſed to ſo much indecent inſpection. But, laying aſide all arguments of the probable kind, I deny the fact abſolutely: and I have the better title to expect credit, becauſe it could not be true without my knowledge, or at leaſt ſuſpicion of it; and becauſe even they who believed it, for all who aſſerted it did not believe it, had no proof to produce, nor have to this hour, but vain ſurmiſes; nor any authority to reſt upon, but the clamor of party.

THAT there were particular men, who correſponded indirectly, and directly too, with the pretender, and with others for his ſervice; that theſe men profeſſed themſelves to be zealous in it, and made large promiſes, and raiſed ſome faint hopes, I cannot doubt: tho this was unknown to me at that time, or at leaſt I knew it not with the ſame certainty, and in the ſame detail, that I have known it ſince. But if this

was

was done by ſome who were in the queen's ſervice, it was done too by ſome who were out of it, and, I think, with little ſincerity by either.

It may well ſeem ſtrange to one who carries in his breaſt a heart like yours, that men of any rank, and eſpecially of the higheſt, ſhould hold a conduct ſo falſe, ſo dangerous, always of uncertain event, and often, as it was in the caſe here mentioned, upon remote contingencies, and ſuch as they themſelves think the leaſt probable. Even I think it ſtrange, who have been much longer mingled in a corrupt world, and who have ſeen many more examples of the folly, of the cunning, and the perfidy of mankind. A great regard to wealth, and a total contempt of virtue, are ſentiments very nearly allied: and they muſt poſſeſs the whole ſouls of men whom they can determine to ſuch infamous duplicity, to ſuch double treachery. In fact they do ſo. One is ſo afraid of loſing his fortune, that he lays in claims to ſecure it, perhaps to augment it, on all ſides, and to prevent even imaginary dangers. Another values ſo little the inward teſtimony of a good conſcience, or the future reproaches of thoſe he has deceived, that he ſcruples not to take engagements, for a time to come, that he has no deſign to keep; if they may ſerve as expedients to facilitate, in any ſmall degree, the ſucceſs of an immediate project. All this was done at the time, on the occaſion, and by the perſons I intend. But the ſcheme of defeating the proteſtant ſucceſſion was ſo far from being laid by the queen and her miniſters, and ſuch a reſolution was ſo far from being taken, that the very men I ſpeak of, when they were preſſed by the other ſide, that is from Verſailles and St. Germains, to be more particular, and to come into a cloſer concert, declined both, and gave the moſt evaſive anſwers.

A LITTLE before, or about, the time of the queen's death, ſome other perſons who figured afterwards in the rebellion, entered in good earneſt into thoſe engagements, as I believe; for I do not know exactly the date of them. But whenever they took them, they took them as ſingle men. They could anſwer for no party to back them. They might flatter themſelves with hopes and dreams like POMPEY, if little men and little things may be compared with great, of legions ready to riſe at the ſtamp of their feet. But they had no aſſurance, no nor grounds to expect any troops, except thoſe of the highlands; whoſe diſpoſition in general was known to every man, but whoſe inſurrection, without the concurrence of other inſurrections and other troops, was deemed, even by thoſe that made them take arms afterwards, not a ſtrength but a weakneſs; ruin to the poor people, and ruin to the cauſe. In a word, theſe men were ſo truly ſingle in their engagements, and their meaſures were ſo unripe for action when the reſolution of acting immediately was taken by them, that, I am perſuaded, they durſt not communicate their deſign to any one man of conſequence that ſerved at that time with them. What perſuades me of it is this. One man, whom they thought likely to incline to them on ſeveral accounts, they attempted indirectly and at a great diſtance: they came no nearer to the point with him, neither then, that is juſt before the queen's death, nor afterwards. They had indeed no encouragement to do it; for, upon this hint and another circumſtance which fell in, both he and others took ſeveral occaſions to declare, that tho they would ſerve the queen faithfully, and excluſively of all other regards or engagements, to her laſt breath, yet after her deceaſe they would acknowledge the prince on whom the ſucceſſion devolved by law, and to which they had ſworn, and no other. This declaration would have been that of the far greateſt num-

ber of the ſame party, and would have been ſtuck to by them, if the paſſions and private intereſts of another party had not prevailed over the true intereſt of a new family that was going to mount the throne. You may aſk me now, and the queſtion will not be at all improper, How it came to paſs, if the queen and her miniſters had no deſign to defeat the ſucceſſion, that ſo much ſuſpicion of it prevailed, that ſo great an alarm was taken, and ſo great a clamor raiſed? I might anſwer you very ſhortly and very truly, By the ſtrange conduct of a firſt miniſter, by the conteſts about the negociations of the peace, and by the arts of a party.

THE minds of ſome miniſters are like the "ſanctum ſanctorum" of a temple I have read of ſomewhere: before it a great curtain was ſolemnly drawn; within it nothing was to be ſeen but a confuſed groupe of miſ-ſhapen, and imperfect forms, heads without bodies, bodies without heads, and the like. To develope the moſt complicated caſes, and to decide in the moſt doubtful, has been the talent of great miniſters: it is that of others to perplex the moſt ſimple, and to be puzzled by the plaineſt. No man was more deſirous of power than the miniſter here intended, and he had a competent ſhare of cunning to wriggle himſelf into it; but then his part was over, and no man was more at a loſs how to employ it. The ends, he propoſed to himſelf, he ſaw for the moſt part darkly and indiſtinctly: and if he ſaw them a little better, he ſtill made uſe of means diſproportionate to them. That private correſpondence with the queen, which produced the change of the miniſtry in 1710, was begun with him whilſt he was ſecretary of ſtate, and was continued, thro him, during the two years that intervened between his leaving the court, and his return to it. This gave him the ſole confidence of the queen, put him more abſolutely at the head of the party that came into

into power, and inveſted him with all the authority that a firſt miniſter could have in thoſe days, and before any man could preſume to rival, in that rank, and in this kingdom, the rank of the ancient mayors of the palace in France. The tories, with whom and by whom he had riſen, expected much from him. Their expectations were ill anſwered: and I think that ſuch management as he employed would not have hindered them long from breaking from him, if new things had not fallen in, to engage their whole attention, and to divert their paſſions.

THE fooliſh proſecution of SACHEVEREL had carried party-rage to the heighth, and the late change of the miniſtry had confirmed it there. Theſe circumſtances, and many others relative to them, which I omit, would have made it impoſſible, if there had been honeſty and wiſdom enough to deſire it, to bring about a coalition of the bulk of the tories and whigs at the latter end of this reign: as it had been brought about a few years before under the adminiſtration of my lord MARLBOROUGH and my lord GODOLPHIN, who broke it ſoon, and before it had time to cement, by making ſuch an uſe of it as I am unable to account for, even at this hour. The two parties were in truth become factions in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word. I was of one, and I own the guilt; which no man of the other would have a good grace to deny. In this reſpect they were alike; but here was the difference: one was well united, well conducted, and determined to their future, as well as their preſent objects. Not one of theſe advantages attended the other. The miniſter had evidently no bottom to reſt his adminiſtration upon, but that of the party at the head of which he came into power: if he had reſted it there, if he had gained their confidence, inſtead of creating, even wantonly, if I may ſay ſo, a diſtruſt of

himſelf in them, it is certain he might have determined them to every national intereſt during the queen's time, and after her death. But this was above his conception as well as his talents. He meant to keep power as long as he could, by the little arts by which he had got into it: he thought that he ſhould be able to compound for himſelf in all events, and cared little what became of his party, his miſtreſs, or the nation. That this was the whole of his ſcheme appeared ſufficiently in the courſe of his adminiſtration; was then ſeen by ſome; and has been ſince acknowledged by all people. For this purpoſe he coaxed and perſecuted whigs; he flattered and diſappointed tories; and ſupported, by a thouſand little tricks, his tottering adminiſtration. To the tory party he held out the peace, as an æra when all they expected ſhould be done for them, and when they ſhould be placed in ſuch fulneſs of power and ſuch ſtrength of party, "that it would be more "the intereſt of the ſucceſſor to be well with them, than "theirs to be well with him." Such expreſſions were often uſed, and others of like import: and, I believe, theſe oracular ſpeeches were interpreted, as oracles uſed to be, according as every man's inclinations led him.

The conteſts that ſoon followed, by the violent oppoſition to the negotiations of peace, did the good hinted at above to the miniſter, and enabled him to amuſe and banter his party a little longer. But they did great, and in ſome reſpects, irreparable, miſchief to Great Britain, and to all Europe. One part of the miſchief they did at home is proper to be mentioned here. They dipped the houſe of Hanover in our party-quarrels, unſeaſonably, I preſume to think, and impopularly; for tho the conteſt was maintained by two parties that pretended equally to have the national intereſt at heart, yet the national intereſt was ſo plainly on one ſide of the queſtion, and

and the other ſide was ſo plainly partial, at the expence of this intereſt, to the emperor, the princes of the empire, and our other allies, that a ſucceſſor to the crown, who was himſelf a prince of Germany, ſhould have preſerved, in good policy, for this very reaſon, the appearance at leaſt of ſome neutrality. The means employed openly to break the queen's meaſures were indecent and unjuſtifiable: thoſe employed, ſecretly, and meditated to be employed, were worſe. The miniſters of Hanover, whoſe conduct I may cenſure the more freely becauſe the late king did not approve it all, took ſo remarkable a ſhare in the firſt, that they might be, and they were, ſuſpected of having ſome in the others. This had a very bad effect, which was improved by men in the two extremes. The whigs deſired nothing more than to have it thought that the ſucceſſor was theirs, if I may repeat an inſolent expreſſion which was uſed at that time: the notion did them honor, and, tho it could give no color, it gave ſome ſtrength, to their oppoſition. The Jacobites inſinuated induſtriouſly the ſame thing; and repreſented that the eſtabliſhment of the houſe of Hanover would be the eſtabliſhment of the whig party, and that the intereſts of Great Britain would be conſtantly ſacrificed to foreign intereſts, and her wealth drained to ſupport them under that family. I leave you to judge what ingreſſion ſuch exaggerations muſt find, on ſuch occaſion, and in ſuch a ferment. I do not think they determined men to Jacobitiſm. I know they did not; but I know that they diſinclined men from the ſucceſſion, and made many, who reſolved to ſubmit to it, ſubmit to it rather as a neceſſary evil, than as an eligible good.

THIS was, to the beſt of my obſervation and knowledge, the ſtate of one party. An abſurd one it was, and the conſequences of it were foreſeen, foretold, and preſſed upon the miniſter

miniſter at the time, but always without effect, and ſometimes without any anſwers. He had ſome private intrigue for himſelf at Hanover: ſo he had at Bar. He was the bubble of one in the end: the pretender was ſo of the other. But his whole management in the mean time was contrived to keep up a kind of general indetermination in the party about the ſucceſſion; which made a man of great temper once ſay to him with paſſion, that "he believed no other miniſter, at "the head of a powerful party, would not be better at Hano-"ver, if he did not mean to be worſe there."

THE ſtate of the other party was this. The whigs had appeared zealous for the proteſtant ſucceſſion from the time when king WILLIAM propoſed it, after the death of the duke of GLOUCESTER. The tories voted for it then; and the acts that were judged neceſſary to ſecure it, ſome of them at leaſt, were promoted by them. Yet were they not thought, nor did they affect, as the others did, to be thought, extremely fond of it. King WILLIAM did not come into this meaſure, till he found, upon trial, that there was no other ſafe and practicable: and the tories had an air of coming into it for no other reaſon. Beſides which, it is certain that there was at that time a much greater leaven of Jacobitiſm in the tory-lump, than at the time ſpoken of here.

NOW, thus far the whigs acted like a national party, who thought that their religion and liberty could be ſecured by no other expedient, and therefore adhered to this ſettlement of the crown with diſtinguiſhed zeal. But this national party degenerated ſoon into faction; that is, the national intereſt became ſoon a ſecondary and ſubſervient motive, and the cauſe of the ſucceſſion was ſupported more for the ſake of the party or faction, than for the ſake of the nation; and with views

that went more directly to the eſtabliſhment of their own adminiſtration, than to a ſolid ſettlement of the preſent royal family. This appeared, evidently enough, to thoſe whom noiſe and ſhew could not impoſe upon, in the latter end of the queen's reign, and plain beyond diſpute to all mankind, after her deceaſe. The art of the whigs was to blend, as undiſtinguiſhably as they could, all their party-intereſts with thoſe of the ſucceſſion: and they made juſt the ſame factious uſe of the ſuppoſed danger of it, as the tories had endeavoured to make, ſome time before, of the ſuppoſed danger of the church. As no man is reputed a friend to chriſtianity beyond the Alpes and the Pyrenées, who does not acknowledge the papal ſupremacy, ſo here no man was to be reputed a friend to the proteſtant ſucceſſion, who was not ready to acknowledge their ſupremacy. The intereſt of the preſent royal family was, to ſucceed without oppoſition and riſque, and to come to the throne in a calm. It was the intereſt of a faction that they ſhould come to it in a ſtorm. Accordingly the whigs were very near putting in execution ſome of the wildeſt projects of inſurrections and rebellion, under pretence of ſecuring what there was not ſufficient diſpoſition, nor any preparation at all made to obſtruct. Happily for the public theſe deſigns proved abortive. They were too well known to have ſucceeded; but they might have had, and they would have had, moſt fatal conſequences. The ſtorm, that was not raiſed to diſturb and endanger the late king's acceſſion, was only deferred. To a party, who meant nothing leſs than engroſſing the whole power of the government and the whole wealth of the nation under the ſucceſſor, a ſtorm, in which every other man ſhould be driven from him, was too neceſſary, not to be conjured up at any rate; and it was ſo immediately after the late king's acceſſion. He came to the throne eaſily, and quietly, and took poſſeſſion of the kingdom with as little trouble, as

he could have expected if he had been not only the queen's ſucceſſor, but her ſon. The whole nation ſubmitted chearfully to his government, and the queen's ſervants diſcharged the duty of their offices, whilſt he continued them in their offices, in ſuch a manner as to merit his approbation. This was ſignified to ſome of them, to the ſecretaries in particular, in the ſtrongeſt terms, and according to his majeſty's expreſs order, before the whole council of ſtate. He might I think, I thought then that he ought, and every man, except the earl of O—D, who believed, or had a mind to make others believe, that his influence would be great in the new reign, expected, that he would have given his principal confidence and the principal power of the adminiſtration to the whigs: but it was ſcarce poſſible to expect, that he would immediately let looſe the whole fury of party, ſuffer the queen's ſervants, who had ſurely been guilty of no crime againſt him, nor the ſtate, to be ſo bitterly perſecuted; and proſcribe in effect every man in the country who did not bear the name of whig. Princes have often forgot, on their acceſſion to a throne, even perſonal injuries received in party quarrels: and the ſaying of LEWIS the twelfth of France, in anſwer to thoſe who would have perſuaded him to ſhew ſeverity to LA TREMOUILLE, is very deſervedly famous. "God forbid," ſaid he, "that LEWIS the twelfth ſhould revenge the quarrels of "the duke of Orleans." Other princes, who have fought their way to the throne, have not only exerciſed clemency, but ſhewn favor to thoſe who had ſtood in arms againſt them: and here again I might quote the example of another king of France, that of HENRY the fourth. But to take an example in our own country, look back to the reſtoration, conſider all that paſſed from the year 1641 to the year 1660, and then compare the meaſures that king CHARLES the ſecond was adviſed to purſue, for the eſtabliſhment of his government, in the cir-

cumſtances of that time, with thoſe which the late king was adviſed, and prevailed on, againſt his opinion, inclination, and firſt reſolution, to purſue, in the circumſtances I have juſt mentioned. I leave the concluſion to the candor and good ſenſe of every impartial reader.

To theſe meaſures of unexpected violence, alone, it muſt be aſcribed, that the pretender had any party for him of ſtrength ſufficient to appear and act. Theſe meaſures, alone, produced the troubles that followed, and dyed the royal ermines of a prince, no way ſanguinary, in blood. I am far from excuſing one party, for ſuffering another to drive them into rebellion. I wiſh I could forget it myſelf. But there are two obſervations on that event, which I cannot refuſe myſelf to make. One is, that the very manner in which this rebellion was begun, ſhews abundantly that it was a ſtart of paſſion, a ſudden phrenſy of men tranſported by their reſentment, and nothing leſs than the execution of a deſign long premeditated and prepared. The other is, that few examples are to be found in hiſtory, perhaps none, of what happened on this occaſion, when the ſame men, in the ſame country, and in the compaſs of the ſame year, were ready to riſe in arms againſt one prince without any national cauſe; and then provoked, by the violence of their councils, the oppoſite faction to riſe in actual rebellion againſt the ſucceſſor.

These are ſome of the effects of maintaining diviſions in a nation, and of governing by faction. I might deſcend into a detail of many fatal conſequences that have followed, from the firſt falſe ſtep which was taken, when the preſent ſettlement was ſo avowedly made, on the narrow bottom of party. But I conſider that this diſcourſe is growing into length;

that I have had, and ſhall have occaſion to mention ſome of theſe conſequences elſewhere; and that your own reflections on what has been ſaid will more than ſupply what I omit to ſay in this place. Let me therefore conclude by repeating, that diviſion has cauſed all the miſchief we lament, that union can alone retrieve it, and that a great advance towards this union was the coalition of parties, ſo happily begun, ſo ſucceſsfully carried on, and of late ſo unaccountably neglected, to ſay no worſe. But let me add, that this union can never be complete, till it become an union of the head with the members, as well as of the members with one another: and that ſuch an union can never be expected till patriotiſm fills the throne, and faction be baniſhed from the adminiſtration.

SOME

SOME

REFLECTIONS

ON

The Preſent STATE of the NATION,

Principally with Regard to

Her TAXES and her DEBTS,

AND ON

The CAUSES and CONSEQUENCES of them.

" Mihi autem non minori curae eſt qualis reſpublica poſt mortem
" meam futura ſit, quam qualis hodiè ſit." CIC. in Lael.

SOME

REFLECTIONS

ON

The Preſent STATE of the NATION,

Principally with Regard to

Her TAXES and her DEBTS,

AND ON

The CAUSES and CONSEQUENCES of them.

SINCE we are got out of a war the leaſt ſucceſsful, and the moſt expenſive, that this nation ever made; after having taken part threeſcore years together, like principal actors, in all the other wars and all the negotiations of the continent; it is time ſurely, that we recal our attention homewards, and conſider the preſent ſtate of our own country, particularly with reſpect to her taxes and her debts, to the nature and application of the former, to the riſe and progreſs of the latter, to the neceſſity and to the means of diminiſhing both.

THE revolution of our government in one thouſand ſix hundred and eighty eight, makes a moſt remarkable æra in the hiſtory of Britain on many accounts, and on none more than on that which is the ſubject of theſe papers. The public revenue, in net money, amounted at that time to no more than two millions annually, which were ſufficient to defray the ordinary ex-

pences of the crown, as well as to maintain a fleet, and a greater army than was neceſſary for the defence of the country at that time. This revenue was raiſed without any tax on land or malt, and by a very few of thoſe innumerable duties which have been ſince laid, to the oppreſſion of the landed and mercantile intereſt of the nation. Theſe duties have been ſo mortgaged too, that we are unable, at this time, to ſend a cock-boat to ſea, or to keep a ſingle centinel at Whitehall-gate without a land-tax.

THE public debts, that of the bankers included, amounted to little more than 300,000 *l.* at the beginning of this aera. They amount now to fourſcore millions. To diſcover how this great change in our national circumſtances has been brought about is ſurely an object of reaſonable, and may be ſuch of uſeful, curioſity.

KING WILLIAM engaged in a neceſſary war with France as ſoon as he came to the throne. It was neceſſary that he ſhould maintain the revolution he had made, and aſſert his right to the crown he had acquired by the beſt of all titles, the free gift of a people whom he had delivered from impending deſtruction, from popery and ſlavery. This war might be thought neceſſary too in another reſpect.

FROM the treaty of Weſtphalia, and from the Pyrenean, to the acceſſion of king WILLIAM to our throne, the power and ambition of France had grown up together, and were become exorbitant. No efforts had been made ſufficient to reduce, ſcarce any ſufficient to reſiſt, the former. No meaſures had been concerted, no preparations had been made, to diſappoint the latter in that great object, the acquiſition of the Spaniſh monarchy to the houſe of Bourbon. From the revolution this alarm was taken, which ſhould have been taken ſooner. The

ſpirit

ſpirit of our court was changed, the eyes of our people were opened, and all men ſaw how neceſſary it was to preſerve, in concert with the Spaniards, the ſucceſſion of their monarchy to the houſe of Auſtria, inſtead of ſuffering it to fall into that of Bourbon, which was excluded from it by the moſt ſolemn engagements.

QUEEN ANNE came to the throne at the eve of another great war, of a war againſt France and Spain, which her predeceſſor was ready to undertake, tho he had not actually declared it when he died, in order to procure ſome reaſonable ſatisfaction to the emperor, for a ſucceſſion which had been then loſt to his family by his own fault.

KING WILLIAM, who engaged for ſo much more in the firſt grand alliance, would engage for no more than this in the ſecond. But the private intereſt of her miniſters, the intrigues of her allies, and the raſhneſs of a party, drew the queen much further: and it muſt be confeſſed that a ſubſerviency to the court of Vienna, which has coſt us ſo dear, began in her time, not in king WILLIAM's, tho her heart was, what ſhe declared it to be, entirely Engliſh, and tho he was cenſured, I think very unjuſtly, for too great regard to foreign intereſts and too little for thoſe of Britain.

THE war king WILLIAM waged was not very ſucceſsful; and yet if the emperor would have conſented to ſend his ſecond ſon into Spain during the life of Charles the ſecond, king WILLIAM would have ſucceeded in both the objects of this war. He had maintained himſelf on the throne, and had obliged France to promiſe that ſhe would not diſturb him in the poſſeſſion of it. As to the other object, no treaties of partition would have been thought neceſſary by him in that caſe; nei-

ther would this nation have had any thing more to do, when the Spaniſh ſucceſſion was open, than to ſupport, with the concurrence of that whole nation, an Auſtrian prince who was actually on the ſpot with an Auſtrian army, and who had been already declared preſumptive heir. Thus we might have had a defenſive war to make with great advantages on our ſide; and the events of the offenſive war, which we were obliged to make afterwards, ſhew ſufficiently what would have been the ſucceſs of the other. The councils of Vienna laid us wantonly, if I may ſay ſo, under great diſadvantages: and king WILLIAM therefore reſolved, like a wiſe prince, to expoſe neither this country nor his own to the hard taſk of recovering the whole Spaniſh monarchy out of the hands of PHILIP. He accommodated his ſyſtem to the circumſtances of the time; and aimed at no more now than to force the French and Spaniards to come into ſome compoſition about the Auſtrian pretenſions, about trade, about barriers, and about effectual means to hinder a future union of France and Spain under one monarch.

THIS was all that he meaned. But they who delighted in war, becauſe they hoped to get immenſely by it, and they who amuſed themſelves and others with vain ſpeculations, about a thing very real in itſelf, about a ballance of power, enſnared both England and Holland into engagements for dethroning PHILIP and ſetting up CHARLES in his room, tho we had acknowledged the former, tho the Caſtilians were ſtrongly attached to him, and tho he was in quiet poſſeſſion of the Spaniſh dominions in both hemiſpheres. Flattered by groundleſs hopes of a revolution in favor of his rival, and fluſhed by the firſt ſucceſs of our arms, this precipitate engagement was approved and ſupported by us, notwithſtanding the abſurd conduct of the emperor and the wiſe reſerve of king WILLIAM,

WILLIAM, both of which ſhould have put us more on our guard, and have made us leſs ſanguine.

IT is perhaps worth while to make an obſervation in this place, which was made at the time we ſpeak of by Spaniards who acknowledged PHILIP the fifth, in compliance with the will of CHARLES the ſecond, and yet were averſe to the influence and authority which France aſſumed over them. They obſerved, that CROMWEL had forced them to give their infanta to LEWIS the fourteenth, by joining his arms with thoſe of France againſt them, and that we went about to force them, half a century afterwards, by a new war, to an abſolute dependance on France.

THE court of Vienna, deſirous to acquire the Italian dominions, and too indifferent about Spain and the Weſt-Indies, made her profit of our raſhneſs. She left the whole weight of the war on England and Holland. She did worſe. She not only neglected the war by contributing little or nothing to it, except the name of Auſtria and the claims of that family; ſhe ſacrificed the ſucceſs of the common cauſe, for ſo it was called improperly enough by her, whenever any little inferior intereſt that ſeemed to be hers more immediately came in the way; by which ſhe not only prolonged the war, but increaſed the annual expence of it to England and Holland, without taking any ſhare in this expence on herſelf that deſerves to be mentioned.

EXPERIENCE was loſt upon us. Our political delirium continued. It grew in ſome ſort habitual by the artifice employed at home, and by the victories obtained abroad. The war languiſhed however upon the whole, notwithſtanding our utmoſt efforts; the weight of Auſtria grew every year heavier on

on us, whilſt that of Spain grew every year lighter on France; the Spaniards were able to defend themſelves againſt us at laſt, and the ſucceſs of our enemies in Spain made them amends for our victories in Flanders.

THE dethronement of PHILIP in favor of CHARLES, was become evidently a chimerical project in the year 1710, at the lateſt, and it became in the following year ſo ineligible by the death of the emperor JOSEPH, to whom his younger brother CHARLES ſucceeded, that one cannot conceive the men who clamored for it, even then to have been in earneſt; ſince their aim, in that caſe, muſt have been to ſet the Imperial and Spaniſh crowns on the ſame head, againſt the common intereſt of Europe and the fundamental principle of the war.

BUT tho we could not conquer Spain by a war, we might have reduced the exorbitant power of France by a peace. We might have ſtripped her of that barrier wherein this exorbitant power conſiſted chiefly, as every man, who knew what he meaned when he talked of this exorbitant power, muſt have intended. We might have laid her as open to the incurſions of her neighbours, as her neighbours were to hers: as open as ſhe had been when a prince CASIMIR, or any other general of Reitres, could penetrate without a ſiege, and ſometimes without a battle, into the heart of her provinces.

BUT we would not do the latter, becauſe we could not do the former. We acted like men who thought that the exorbitant power of one family could not be reduced, unleſs a power as exorbitant was raiſed in another; and who never looked back to preceding centuries to conſider the uſurpations, the tyranny, and the bigotry that the houſe of Auſtria had exerciſed

ciſed in the fulneſs of her power, and would exerciſe again if ſhe was ever reſtored to the ſame.

We were diſappointed in our great political views, after two wars that had laſted twenty-five years with a very ſhort interval between them. We had done our utmoſt to defeat that ſcheme of ambition France had opened to herſelf, and of danger to all her neighbours, by the Pyrenean treaty: and, tho this danger affected us leſs than any other nation engaged in the alliance, we had exhauſted ourſelves to maintain it.

When king William entered, immediately after the revolution, on this great ſcene of action; the unincumbered condition of this nation, which has been hinted at above, was ſuch, that he might have been ſupported in it by good management, as profuſely as he was, and even more effectually, by the revenue then ſubſiſting, by a land-tax, by the exciſe on malt, and by ſome additional ſubſidies, all of which would have been raiſed within the year. A ſcheme of this kind was prepared and offered. It was allowed to be practicable: but it was rejected for a reaſon that appeared plauſible in political refinement, and has proved moſt pernicious in it's conſequences. It was ſaid that a new government, eſtabliſhed againſt the ancient principles and actual engagements of many, could not be ſo effectually ſecured any way, as it would be if the private fortunes of great numbers were made to depend on the preſervation of it; and that this could not be done unleſs they were induced to lend their money to the public, and to accept ſecurities under the preſent eſtabliſhment. Thus the method of funding and the trade of ſtock-jobbing began. Thus were great companies created, the pretended ſervants, but in many reſpects the real maſters of every adminiſtration.

I DO not pretend to determine how far the wiſdom of our legiſlature might have provided, at the beginning of the new war, againſt the growth and ſpreading of that cancerous humor, which had begun to gnaw our vitals in the former. All I am to obſerve is, that, a moneyed intereſt being firmly eſtabliſhed by this time, and ſuch numbers being accuſtomed to make immenſe profit at the public expence, there is no room to wonder if we proceeded on the ſame plan during the reign of queen ANNE. We did ſo: and the debts contracted in this war, being added to thoſe of the former, the whole of our debt amounted to little leſs than fifty millions.

HAVING accumulated ſo immenſe a debt, the queen put an end to the war. She could not attempt to alter the ſyſtem of it whilſt it continued, without throwing the whole alliance into confuſion, after ſome of the principal allies had declared, on the death of JOSEPH, that they would not conſent CHARLES ſhould be king of Spain as well as emperor.

THE intereſt of Britain required, no doubt, that we ſhould turn our eyes from the continent to our own iſland, and that we ſhould improve the opportunity and the advantages which a peace gave us. Whatever prejudices have been propagated induſtriouſly againſt that of Utrecht, thus much at leaſt is certain. We were obliged no longer by treaties to aſſume any other part in the affairs of the continent, than that which the immediate intereſt of our country required. The opportunity and the means of diminiſhing taxes, reviving commerce, and paying debts were open to us.

THIS pacific ſcheme ought to have been purſued, no doubt, till we had retrieved our affairs, and recovered our former

ſtrength in ſome good degree, and till we were prepared to take any part in future events which our honor or intereſt might require. Nay, this ſcheme was the more neceſſary to be purſued; if France was left too powerful, no matter by whoſe fault, as I am ready to admit that ſhe was; and if the two branches of Bourbon were to be looked upon in this century, like the two branches of Auſtria in the laſt, as inſeparable allies, united by blood and by joint ambition. It was the more eaſy to be purſued too, becauſe a long minority was beginning in France, and many other circumſtances of characters and of ſituation extremely favorable to it concurred in that court and country.

THIS ſhould have been the ſcheme of our policy: but unhappily it was not. The late king, as elector of Hanover, had reaſon, no doubt, to deſire the acquiſition of Bremen and Verden. Our nation contributed to it with her money, and forced it with her arms; tho it was made in contradiction to the engagements that the crown of England had taken when king WILLIAM gave his guaranty to the treaty of Travendal. This acquiſition became the firſt link of a political chain, by which we were dragged back into new and expenſive broils, the conſequences whereof we feel at this hour.

WHEN the king acquired theſe dutchies, it became neceſſary to procure the inveſtiture of them: and I will ſay, becauſe I can demonſtrate, that theſe inveſtitures might have been procured, and the emperor flattered with the acquiſition of Sicily, by meaſures as effectual, and much more conſiſtent with former treaties and the public tranquillity, than thoſe that were taken. The houſe of Auſtria ſacrificed the ſucceſs of the war to the immediate acquiſition of Naples. We ſacrificed all the advantages of the peace, to procure her that of Sicily in the manner we did procure it. I have heard it ſaid,

whilſt theſe affairs were in tranſaction, that the treaty of quadruple alliance would complete that of Utrecht. But the event has ſhewn, and it was obvious to foreſee, that one of theſe treaties would unravel the ſyſtem of the other. If we had maintained the neutrality of Italy, as we were obliged to do by treaty, even indulging the emperor in the acquiſition of Sicily, and yielding to the houſe of Savoy the eventual ſucceſſions which we ſtipulated ſhould be given to Spain, the intention of the treaty of Utrecht would have been preſerved, and France by concurring in theſe meaſures would have ſhewn her ſincerity in maintaining the ſettlement of Europe. But when ſhe became a party to the quadruple alliance, ſhe meaned nothing more than to give the Spaniſh branch of Bourbon an opportunity of reannexing to that crown the Italian dominions: and we were groſsly her bubbles when we triumphed that ſhe entered into the quadruple alliance, and made a ſham war to oblige PHILIP to accede to it.

As long, then, as there were hopes of obtaining an extraordinary inveſtiture of Bremen and Verden, we flattered the emperor at no ſmall expence. As ſoon as it became apparent that this inveſtiture could be obtained in no other manner than it had been granted formerly, we inſulted him. We imputed to him deſigns, he has conſtantly diſowned, and we have never proved; after which we complained of his ingratitude, we threatened war, and we prepared for it by maintaining with great profuſion a ſtanding army of Heſſians in Germany. The ſame men, who complained ſo lately that France had been left too powerful by the treaty of Utrecht, and that great danger would ariſe from her cloſe connection with Spain, complained now of the too great power of the houſe of Auſtria, and of the danger that would ariſe from a good underſtanding between the emperor and king PHILIP. In ſhort, our politics were not only variable, but incomprehenſible to every man who knew the ſtate and intereſt of

of Great Britain, but was not ſo well appriſed of the ſeveral turns of intereſt which were to be ſerved abroad.

When our miniſters had once departed from the ſtrait line of Britiſh policy, the difficulty of returning to it became every year greater, and the inclination every year leſs. We continued buſy and buſtling in every court of Europe. We negotiated againſt the emperor in concert with France, and gave her thereby the means of regaining more of that credit and influence in the empire which ſhe had formerly had, than ſhe could have acquired without our aſſiſtance. We contrived to make peace abroad almoſt as chargeable to us as war. Abuſes of every kind were ſuffered at home. Trade was neither eaſed nor encouraged, and the gradual payment of our debt was utterly neglected by a miniſter rather deſirous to keep his country under this oppreſſion, than ignorant of the means to deliver her from it. Whilſt we acted in this manner, France grew frugal, ſhe made the debts ſhe could not pay ſit more lightly on her, ſhe raiſed her credit, and ſhe extended her commerce. In ſhort, her ſtrength increaſed, and ours diminiſhed. We were reduced to a ſtate of weakneſs we had never felt before; and this very weakneſs was urged as a reaſon for bearing tamely the loſſes our merchants ſuſtained, and all the affronts our government received, leſt we ſhould be drawn into a war by uſing repriſals, the common right of nations.

As tame as we were, the inſolence of the Spaniards, the reaſonable impatience of our merchants, and this very tameneſs of our government, made a ſea-war unavoidable, juſt before the death of the emperor Charles the ſixth; which event brought the principal powers of Europe into the field, ſet the whole continent in a flame, and formed one of thoſe conjunctures wherein our honor and intereſt may oblige us to

take a part, and for which therefore we ſhould always be prepared.

We were in no degree ſo prepared, after ſix or ſeven and twenty years of peace; and yet when we took a part, we took the moſt laviſh and the moſt impolitic that we could take. It was a miſerable part by ſea at firſt, and thro the whole courſe of the war by land. I ſhall recal neither what we did, nor what we neglected to do; and I wiſh, for the honor of my country, that the whole may be buried in oblivion. Thus much only it is to my purpoſe to obſerve. Firſt, That our councils ſeemed to be the echoes of thoſe free-booters, Trenck and Mentzel, who talked of nothing leſs than conquering the two Alſatias and the three biſhopricks, and of laying Champagne waſte, whilſt all our offenſive projects on the Rhine were daily diſappointed: and ſecondly, That we declined all overtures of peace, when the ſeat of the war was transferred, with great advantage to France, from Germany to the Netherlands, where we reſolved to wage it whether the Dutch would or no, and where we were beat on every ſpot on which my lord Marlborough had conquered.

Every defeat in this war, like every triumph in the laſt, became a reaſon for continuing it: and this management, when no avowable reaſon could be given for it, gave ſuſpicious and refining perſons occaſion to throw out a great deal of ſlander; for ſuch I hope it was. In ſhort, whatever the reaſons were, we continued this inauſpicious war ſo long, and we puſhed it ſo far beyond our ſtrength; that we were within a few months of bankruptcy, when the French granted us, miraculouſly, the ſame terms that they would have granted two or three years before: and when they might have marched without much trouble or oppoſition, after taking Maeſtricht, into the

heart of the Seven Provinces: for our laſt reſource, a Muſcovite army, was too far off to have enabled ours to make a ſtand.

By making the war in the low countries almoſt wholly at our own expence, and without any proſpect of ſucceſs, we meaned to cauſe ſuch a diverſion to the forces of France as might leave Germany nothing to fear on the Rhine, and as might give time and opportunity to the empreſs queen to drive the French and Spaniards out of Lombardy. We ſacrificed ourſelves for theſe purpoſes: but in this war, as in the laſt, the court of Vienna ſacrificed nothing. From the time the French had been obliged, more by the ſickneſs of their troops and the ill conduct of their generals, than by the force of her arms, to abandon Germany, the empreſs queen ſeemed to make war juſt as it ſuited her conveniency, to ſave all the expence ſhe could in the Netherlands, to plunder all ſhe could in Italy, and to make us pay the whole immenſe ſubſidies which we gave her for both.

In the Netherlands we were outnumbered vaſtly by the deficiencies of her quotas: and in Italy, where we had thrown the Genoeſe into the arms of France and Spain, with great and juſt indignation againſt us for the treaty we had made at Worms, and had, however, obliged them to ſubmit after the battle of Placentia, we loſt the whole advantage of it by the inſatiable avarice and extreme brutality of the Auſtrians. Yet we continued our efforts on that ſide ſtill; and the ſham ſiege of Genoa, for it was no more, and the harmleſs invaſions of Provence and Dauphiny had no other meaning than to amuſe and impoſe on us in the exceſs of our zeal.

Our expences in every part of this ſtrange war, particularly in the Netherlands, were made without meaſure, becauſe without controul; as they will be ſoon convinced who look into the artillery, forage, hoſpital, and other contingent accounts. The parliamentary aids from the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and forty excluſively, to the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and forty-eight incluſively, amount to 55,522,959l. 16s. 3d. and the new debt we have contracted to more than thirty millions, which are near twenty millions more of debt than France has contracted in the ſame time: a ſum that will appear incredible to future generations, and is ſo almoſt to the preſent. There are three Reflections to be made on this ſtate, which muſt add to our aſtoniſhment. Firſt, That the greateſt part of this vaſt expence has been granted on account of the war, chiefly ſince there remained no reaſon for continuing it; that is, ſince the time when it was in our power to have a peace at leaſt as good as that we have now obtained; and I place this aera no higher than the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and forty-ſeven incluſively, tho I might place it higher, perphaps, on very good grounds. Secondly, That the debt contracted in it exceeds by much that of king William's, or that of queen Anne's war; tho both of them were much longer, and the laſt not only more widely ſpread, but carried into countries the diſtance of which and many other circumſtances increaſed every article of our expence extraordinarily. Thirdly, That we have thrown, by our negotiations and by the late war, into the hands of the houſe of Bourbon much more dominion in Italy, than would have induced the French at Gertruydenberg to have recalled Philip, and to have given up Spain and the Indies; which they were ready to do at thoſe conferences, as Buys and Vanderduſſen acquainted the miniſters of the allies, in making one of their reports to that aſſembly.

Bad

BAD as our condition is, let us not deſpair. Not to deſpair of the commonwealth, whatever her condition be, is the principle of a true patriot, that is, of a faithful ſervant to his prince and country: and we may find an example to this purpoſe, which deſerves to be quoted, in a book that is in the hands of moſt people, and that I hope is not unread at court, I mean the duke of SULLY's memoirs. In them we find that HENRY the fourth turned his whole application to every thing that might be uſeful or even convenient to his kingdom, without ſuffering things that happened out of it to paſs unobſerved by him, as ſoon as he had put an end to the civil wars of France, and had concluded a peace with Spain at Vervins. Is there a man, either prince or ſubject, who can read without the moſt elevated and the moſt tender ſentiments the language he held to SULLY at this time, when he thought himſelf dying of a great illneſs he had at Monceaux? "My friend!" ſaid he, "I have no fear of death. "You, who have ſeen me expoſe my life ſo often, when I "might ſo eaſily have kept out of danger, know this better "than any man. But I muſt confeſs that I am unwilling to "die, before I have raiſed this kingdom to the ſplendor I "have propoſed to myſelf; and before I have ſhewn my peo-"ple that I love them like my children, by diſcharging them "from a part of the taxes that have been laid on them, and "by governing them with gentleneſs."

THE ſtate of France was then even worſe than the ſtate of Great Britain is now, the debts as heavy, many of the provinces entirely exhauſted, and none of them in a condition of bearing any new impoſition. The ſtanding revenues brought into the king's coffers no more than thirty millions, tho an hundred and fifty millions were raiſed on the people: ſo great

were the abuſes of that government in raiſing of money, and they were not leſs in the diſpenſation of it. The whole ſcheme of the adminiſtration was a ſcheme of fraud, and all who ſerved, cheated the public, from the higheſt offices down to the loweſt, from the commiſſioners * of the treaſury down to the under-farmers and the under-treaſurers. SULLY beheld this ſtate of things, when he came to have the ſole ſuperintendancy of affairs, with horror. He was ready to deſpair: but he did not deſpair. Zeal for his maſter, zeal for his country, and this very ſtate ſeemingly ſo deſperate, animated his endeavours: and the nobleſt thought, that ever entered into the mind of a miniſter, entered into his. He reſolved to make, and he made, the reformation of abuſes, the reduction of expences, and a frugal management, the ſinking fund for the payment of national debts, and the ſufficient fund for all the great things he intended to do, without overcharging the people.

HE ſucceeded in all. The people were immediately eaſed, trade revived, the king's coffers were filled, a maritime power was created, and every thing neceſſary was prepared to put the nation in a condition of executing great deſigns, whenever great conjunctures ſhould offer themſelves. Such was the effect of twelve years wiſe and honeſt adminiſtration: and this effect would have ſhewed itſelf in great enterprizes againſt the houſe of Auſtria, more formidable in thoſe days than the houſe of Bourbon has been in ours; if HENRY the fourth had not been ſtabbed by one of thoſe aſſaſſins into whoſe hands the intereſt of this houſe, and the frenzy of religion, had put the dagger more than once.

WHEN we conſider, in theſe memorials, and in others which are come down to us, the deplorable condition to which

* Conſeilliers dans le conſeil des finances.

which France was reduced at the end of the ſixteenth century, we feel ſome of that horror which SULLY himſelf felt, and are ready to confeſs that the ruin of that kingdom, bankruptcy and confuſion, muſt have followed; if the opportunity, which this peaceful conjuncture gave, had not been improved immediately, and as wiſely, and as vigorouſly as it was. Shall we not ſee our own deplorable condition, and the neceſſary conſequences of it in the ſame light? Shall we not be much more ſtrongly affected by them? Are we not as near to bankruptcy as the French nation was at that time, and much more ſo than they are at this time? May not confuſion follow it here as well as there? And finally, may not the joint ambition of two branches of Bourbon in ſome future conjuncture produce effects as fatal, and much more ſo to us, if we continue in our preſent ſtate of impotence till ſuch a conjuncture happens, as were to be feared by France at the time we ſpeak of from the joint ambition of two branches of Auſtria? In ſhort, we have much to apprehend, unleſs we have the courage and the virtue to probe our domeſtic wounds to the bottom, and to apply immediately not palliative, but the moſt ſpecific remedies. If we do this; inſtead of fearing others, we may become once more formidable ourſelves. But this is certain, that they, who get firſt out of a diſtreſs common to us and to our neighbours, will give the law to the reſt.

IT may be ſaid, that we have no SULLIES among us. I ſhall not take on me to determine whether we have or no. But I will venture to ſay, after SULLY himſelf, that altho good princes may be wanting to good miniſters; yet good miniſters will never be wanting to a prince who has diſcernment enough to find them, who chooſes them for their ſuperior parts, experience, and integrity; and who reſolves to ſupport them,

as HENRY the fourth ſupported SULLY, againſt favorite miſtreſſes, the cabals of the court, and the factions of the ſtate.

IT may be ſaid again, that a king of France has power enough by the conſtitution of that government to ſupport a miniſter who checks corruption, reforms abuſes, and maintains a frugal management of the public revenue. But it may be aſked, how a miniſter, who ſhould undertake this, could be ſupported in a government like ours, where he would be ſure to have for his enemies all thoſe who have ſhared ſo long the public ſpoils, or who hope to ſhare them, and where theſe enemies would have the means and opportunities of ſupplanting him, notwithſtanding the protection of his maſter? I anſwer, by the parliament. How many miniſters have there been, to whom much national miſchief was imputed juſtly, and no one national good could be aſcribed, and who were long ſupported by the favor of the crown, and by the concurrence of the two houſes, which this favor and their own management procured them? Shall theſe ſupports be ſufficient for a wicked or a weak miniſter; and ſhall innocence and ability, with the ſame favor and better management, be reckoned for nothing? I cannot think ſo ill, even of the preſent age, as degenerate as it is. It is degenerate no doubt: but I have heard men complain of this degeneracy, who promoted it firſt, and ſought their excuſe in it afterwards.

THE delegated power of a miniſter, under the legal prerogatives of the crown, is ſufficient to carry on a ſyſtem of reformation and frugality in the ordinary courſe of things, if the miniſter really intends it: and whenever extraordinary powers are wanting for extraordinary operations, as they muſt be in ſuch a ſtate as ours, they will be effectual, if granted; and if refuſed, they who refuſe them, not the miniſter,

niſter, will ſuffer by the refuſal, and be anſwerable to the nation for it. The moneyed man may continue to enjoy a little more revenue by this refuſal: but his fortune will be more precarious, and more liable to ſome future reverſe. The merchant will continue to trade, the landed man to plow and ſow, without even a proſpect of being relieved from their ſervitude, not for the honeſt creditors alone, but for uſurers and ſtock-jobbers, for thoſe leeches who fill themſelves continually with the blood of the nation, and never ceaſe to ſuck it. The nation in the mean time will be reduced to the utmoſt poverty: and it behoves thoſe particularly, who have brought us ſo near it, to ſhew that this was not their object, by concurring zealouſly with thoſe who have uſed and will continue to uſe their beſt endeavours to prevent it.

THE difficulties we have to ſtruggle with would not be ſo great as they are, notwithſtanding the immenſe profuſion to which the late war gave occaſion and pretence; if we did not feel in this inſtance, as we feel in others, the fatal conſequences of a precedent adminiſtration. The payment of our debts might have been eaſily provided for in that time: nay, fourteen years, which are little more than two thirds of it, would have been ſufficient to reduce them to twenty millions. If this had been done, the memory of the perſon who was at the head of that adminiſtration, and had the ſole power of it, might have deſerved honor.

LET us nouriſh in ourſelves, and cultivate in others, ſentiments more elevated than theſe, and more worthy of the Britiſh genius. The greater our national diſtreſs and danger are, the greater ſhould the efforts be of every particular man to relieve his country from one, and thereby to guard it againſt the other. We are in a criſis that muſt turn either to

life or death, and that cannot turn to the former unleſs remedies are applied much more effectual than thoſe of mountebanks, who find their account in palliating evils and in prolonging diſeaſes. To palliate and to prolong would be, in our caſe, to kill, or to do ſomething worſe than kill, to break our conſtitution entirely, to render an accidental illneſs habitual and incurable.

ONE or two ſhillings in the pound, it is ſaid, will be leſſened this year upon land; and whatever is wanting for the current ſervice, over and above the two ſhillings that remain, and the malt, will be borrowed on the credit of the ſinking-fund at three per cent. The bait will be tempting; for ſo muſt every diminution of taxes be to thoſe who have crouched ſo long under the weight of ſo many. But I may venture to ſay, that it will be no more than a bait; and that they who ſwallow it will have reaſon to repent of their raſhneſs, when they find, as they will find very probably, that the natural effect of ſuch meaſures muſt prevent the diſcharge of any conſiderable part of our debt, except in a term of years much longer than the proſperity and even the ſafety of our government admits.

I SAY the ſafety, as well as the proſperity: and ſome reflections very plain and obvious, tho made by few, will juſtify me for ſaying ſo. As to the firſt, trade gave us wealth, wealth gave us power, and power raiſed our iſland to be, at one time, a match for France. If we deſire to return into the ſame ſtate, we muſt return by the ſame ſteps which raiſed us to it: and he, who ſhould make a ſcheme for the payment of our debts, without a principal regard to the improvement of our trade, would make a very ſilly ſcheme. But it would be juſt

as ſilly to make a ſcheme for both, in ſuch a manner, as would render neither practicable.

The neceſſity of diminiſhing taxes, in order to improve our trade, becomes a good reaſon, not for the ſtrange purpoſe to which it is applied by ſome, but for haſtening all the operations neceſſary to ſink our debts, in order to haſten that diminution of taxes which will become practicable, when a part of our debt is ſunk, and which will facilitate extremely the diſcharge of the reſt. The truth is, that if we defer theſe operations too long, we may be never able to perform them with equal advantage, nor, by keeping pace with our neighbours, to renew our ſtrength, as faſt as they are intent to renew theirs. Our neighbours have ſuffered by former wars, and have been exhauſted by the laſt as well, tho I apprehend not ſo much, as we. France, for inſtance, has contracted in the late war no more than one third of the additional debt we have contracted in it, as I believe on very good authority: and ſhe has been able to aſſign funds, which pay the intereſt of this debt regularly, and ſink yearly a part of the principal. I am not ſo well appriſed of the actual ſtate of Spain. But the treaſures of the Weſt Indies are poured into her daily; and as ſhe has been long recovered, or recovering, from her antient indolence and ignorance, ſhe ſeems to apply herſelf to the augmentation of her maritime force, to the improvement of her trade, and even to that of domeſtic manufactures. In a word, what has been ſaid before may be repeated here: they who get ſooneſt out of the preſent common diſtreſs, will give the law to others, or be at leaſt in a condition of not receiving it from any one.

As to national ſafety, we ſhall do well to obſerve how much the ſyſtem of dominion and power in Europe is leſs favor-

favorable at preſent to our political intereſts and views, than it was when we undertook to mend it. Spain was falling, but not fallen into the hands of France, at the beginning of this century: and tho the Spaniſh nation as well as court gave their monarchy afterwards to a prince of the houſe of Bourbon, that they might prevent the diſmemberment of it; yet they were averſe enough, by long habits of hoſtility, to a French government. Fortune and we have done ſo well at laſt, that theſe two nations are now cloſely united by intereſt and by habit, and that Spain is therefore more than ever eſtranged from us; the proofs of which are not only recent, but, I fear, actual.

THE frontier of France has been the great ſupport of her exorbitant power, as wiſe men foreſaw fourſcore years ago, when LEWIS the fourteenth began to raiſe that wall of braſs which reaches from the Alps to the Ocean, that it would become. This frontier is now more compact than ever by the acquiſition of Lorain. The branches of the houſe of Bourbon have taken root in Italy as well as in Spain. France has learned by experience to raiſe and to maintain her credit, and to extend her commerce, for the protection and ſupport whereof ſhe ſeems more attentive than ever to increaſe her ſtrength by ſea: a ſtrength ſhe will always exert with great advantage over us in ſome reſpects, I mean in thoſe of order, frugal management, and ſtrict diſcipline.

THE whole empire, except Bavaria and Cologne, was attached to us by inclination as well as intereſt, in the war which began with this century. It is much otherwiſe now: and we may ſay, I fear, too truly, that the influence of France in Germany is little inferior to what it was whilſt the league of the Rhine ſubſiſted.

THE Dutch commonwealth, our beſt ally, and in ſome ſort a barrier to Great Britain, is in a ſtate of diſſolution; and has not, either without, or within herſelf, thoſe means of recovery by conjuncture and by character, that ſhe has had on ſeveral occaſions from the time her government was firſt formed.

THIS ſhort ſtate may ſerve to ſhew how difficult it will be, till we have paid a good part of our debt, and reſtored our country in ſome meaſure to her former wealth and power, to maintain the dignity of Great Britain, to make her reſpected abroad, and ſecure from injuries, or even affronts, on the part of her neighbours. This may appear eaſy, for aught I know, to ſome men. But ſure I am, it would appear difficult to BURLEIGH and WALSINGHAM, if they were to riſe from the dead; notwithſtanding the ſucceſs they had in queen ELIZABETH's reign by doing much at little expence, and by employing management much more than force.

THESE reflections, and ſuch as they ſuggeſt naturally to the mind, make it evident, that the future proſperity and ſafety of this country depend on the ſpeedy diminution of our national debts. Nothing elſe can ſecure us effectually againſt contingent events that may be of fatal conſequence to both. Recent experience has ſhewn how unfit we are become in every reſpect, except the courage of our common ſeamen and ſoldiers, to engage in war. We ſhall not therefore, I ſuppoſe, provoke it eaſily, or ſoon. But war may be brought upon us, tho we ſhould not provoke it, nor go to the continent to ſeek it. Nay, we may be reduced to the melancholy dilemma of increaſing our annual expence to aſſert our rights, to protect our trade, and to maintain our dignity; or of ſitting tamely

tamely down and ſacrificing them all. I think, nay I hope, that we ſhould not do the laſt: and yet we ſhould have much greater difficulties to ſtruggle with in our preſent ſituation, than we had in the former, great as they were, if we attempted to do, what was then ſo ſhamefully neglected. We cannot increaſe our expences now, nor ſhall we be able to do ſo till ſome part of our national debt be diſcharged, without mortgaging on the remainder of the ſinking fund, which would ſoon take away all hope of ever paying any part of this debt, and leave us nothing to mortgage but our land and our malt: whereas if a conſiderable part of this debt was diſcharged before any new war broke out, or we were reduced to any ſuch dilemma as I have mentioned; we ſhould find ourſelves, whilſt it laſted, in a much better condition of defence or offence, and we might be able, as ſoon as it was over, to reſume the ſame operations, and to proceed in our great domeſtic concern.

These conſiderations will have great weight with men, who are able to combine, all that is to be combined on ſuch an important occaſion, and, by reflecting on the paſt, and by obſerving the preſent, to judge of the future. The only effectual, and therefore neceſſary, remedies may appear violent, even to them: but they will conſider, and every man ought to conſider, that if we cannot bear our diſtemper, and will not bear our cure, the political body muſt periſh. This miſerable ſtate will create juſtly the indignation of mankind. But this indignation ſhould turn againſt thoſe who have brought us into it, not againſt thoſe who would deliver us from it. This is the language of reaſon dictated by public ſpirit: but private intereſt and narrow views will dictate another.

The moneyed men will complain loudly that they are expoſed to perpetual reductions of intereſt, which have ſerved to no other purpoſe than to nouriſh the profuſion of ſucceſſive adminiſtrations: and, if this was to continue, their complaints would be juſt, and the hardſhips impoſed upon them intolerable. It is, therefore, juſt that neither they ſhould conſent to this new reduction of intereſt, which may be called a new tax upon them, nor the landed men to the continuance of that old and heavy tax on land, unleſs they have the utmoſt ſecurity that the whole ſhall be applied to its proper uſe. There will be ſtill complaints; and we ſhall hear the melancholy condition to which the widow and the orphan, whoſe ſmall but ſole fortunes are in the funds, will be reduced, moſt pathetically diſplayed. The anſwer will be, however, obvious. If the widow and the orphan, who have their eſtates in money, ſuffer by the reduction of intereſt; the widow and the orphan, who have their eſtates in land, will ſuffer by the continuance of the tax upon it: and both one and the other muſt take their ſhare in the common calamity of their country.

But the truth is, that the feeble voice of the widow and the orphan will be little heard. The great din will be raiſed by ſtock-jobbers and uſurers, by the principal men in our great companies, who, born to ſerve and to obey, have been bred to command even government itſelf. Theſe men will roar aloud, and endeavour, by ſilent intrigue, as well as by noiſe, to obſtruct every meaſure that tends to emancipate government out of their hands, to make the exchequer, what it ought to be, the great ſpring of public credit, and the great ſcene of all tranſactions relative to public receipts and payments.

LET theſe men learn therefore to ſubmit, and to reaſon, as old BATEMAN did, when the reduction of intereſt was agreed to in the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſeventeen. He told my lord STANHOPE, he was glad this reſolution had been taken; becauſe, tho his intereſt diminiſhed, he ſhould think his principal more ſecure than ever. On the whole, complaints from this quarter will make little impreſſion on a miniſter, who knows that, tho ſuch men have been employed whilſt new debts were to be contracted every year, and the public, like an extravagant ſpendthrift, was obliged to deal with uſurers on their own terms; yet they are not to be conſulted when debts are to be paid, and the public to be taken out of their hands; who knows, in ſhort, that his arms are longer than theirs, and makes them feel that he will keep, or not keep, meaſures with them according to their behaviour; who purſues ſteadily the wiſe and honeſt deſign of rendering his own and every future adminiſtration independent of them.

MUCH oppoſition will ariſe from two other quarters, the country and the court; in which I ſhould apprehend that the leaſt plauſible might be the moſt ſucceſsful.

THE landed man will think it hard, that he is not ſuffered to enjoy a little eaſe after having boren the burden and heat of the day, during a long courſe of expenſive peace and of ruinous war. All that can be ſaid, to perſuade him, that an immediate diminution of the land-tax is contrary to his intereſt, will paſs for deception and paradox. He will be apt to reaſon like his country tenants, who are always frightened at an immediate expence, tho remote and yet great profit muſt be the certain conſequence of it. Let ſuch a man look back then, and take his leſſon from what is paſt. He will find that,

whilſt he winked at profuſion becauſe he was flattered by abatements on the land-tax-debts, debts were contracted that have coſt him much more, than the continuance of that tax would have coſt him. If we look back to the firſt ten years of his preſent Majeſty's reign, we ſhall find this very remarkably verified. Let the ſame man, after he has looked back, look forward again. He will ſee that, as any diminution of the land-tax to be ſupplied out of the produce of the ſinking fund, or by borrowing even at three per cent. on the credit of it, muſt prevent, or retard, which may be equivalent to preventing, the diſcharge of any conſiderable part of our debt; ſo he will continue expoſed to have the whole tax laid anew, on the firſt occaſion either real or pretended. He may find himſelf, after a little reſpite, under the load of the ſame tax, and of an increaſed debt: and this may be all he will get by refuſing to bear a little longer, for his own ſake, and for an important object, what he has boren ſeveral years for the ſake of others, and for the ſupport of a moſt unſucceſsful war; for ſuch it may be reckoned, after the French were beat at Dettinghen.

On the other ſide, if he is wiſe enough to deſire, that the four ſhillings in the pound be continued for a few years; he will have his ſhare in the common benefits of diminiſhing public debts, increaſing public credit, improving trade, and reſtoring national proſperity. He may entertain the comfortable hope of a time when he, or his poſterity, will have no need of conſenting to any tax at all on land in time of peace; ſince the annual produce of other funds will be ſooner or later, in this method, ſufficient to defray the annual expence of the government. He may acquire an advantage that will make him ample amends for what it coſt him. Such of the taxes, whether of exciſe or of cuſtoms, as bear hardeſt on the poor

laborers and on our own manufactures, may be reduced, gradually at leaſt, without any conſiderable interruption of the operations neceſſary to diſcharge our national debt: and tho he is little accuſtomed to think himſelf as much affected by other taxes, as he is by the land-tax, he will ſoon perceive, that a ſaving on every thing he eats, drinks, or wears, is a laſting and a large repayment of what this tax took from him whilſt he conſented to continue it. He will find himſelf a gainer, not only by what he ſaves in his expences, but by the improvement of his eſtate; for the whole ſyſtem of national wealth and proſperity are intimately connected.

The courtier will complain loudly, authoritatively, and pompouſly, that any retrenchments on our annual expences may do more hurt, than the ſaving can do good. But I believe it not hard to ſhew, that three ſhillings, or three ſhillings and ſixpence in the pound on land, leaving the reſt of the four ſhillings to go to the ſinking fund, would be more than ſufficient to anſwer all neceſſary expences in time of peace. Wiſe men are able to do a great deal with a little: every knave or fool is ready to do a little with a great deal. The former know that good policy conſiſts in obſerving two ſorts of oeconomy, the greater and the leſs: to proportion, by the firſt, our expences to our circumſtances and to thoſe of our neighbours, and to do it with the utmoſt frugality that theſe circumſtances combined together will admit: to controul, by the ſecond, in the moſt ſtrict and regular manner, the diſpenſation of the public treaſure from the higheſt down to the loweſt offices of the ſtate. It is of the utmoſt importance at this time eſpecially, that both theſe kinds of oeconomy be practiſed. Our well-being: even our ſecurity depends upon them. If we do not pay our debts, we muſt ſink under the load of them: and if we go about to pay them, without practiſing theſe two ſorts of oeconomy;

oeconomy; the ridiculous figure, which I have ſeen in a Dutch print, of a man toiling and ſweating to cord a rope of hay, whilſt an aſs bites it off at the other end as faſt as he cords it, will be our proper emblem.

EXTREME frugality was one of the means employed by the great miniſter who has been quoted above: and the ſucceſs he had, in ſimilar circumſtances, ſhould encourage the practice of the ſame frugality in ours. But he imployed another expedient likewiſe, which is not leſs neceſſary here than it was there, nor in our time than it was in his. The expedient I mean, is that of reforming abuſes. SULLY rendered this reformation no inconſiderable fund for the payment of public debts. Whether we can do ſo, as effectually as he did, or no, I determine not. But thus much is certain. Such a reformation will make all future ſervices be carried on at a cheaper rate for the public; and ſaving is often the ſureſt way of gaining. Materials might be collected, not for a pamphlet, but for a regular treatiſe under diſtinct heads, concerning the abuſes and corruptions which prevail among us in every part of the public ſervice, and concerning the conſequences of them: I know not too whether ſome work of this kind ſhould not be undertaken, as invidious as it may ſeem, if nothing is done to reform theſe abuſes, and to extinguiſh this corruption.

THEY were creeping forward long ago: but ſince a certain period, they have advanced with very large ſtrides. Frauds were connived at, perhaps encouraged, and corruption was propagated formerly by principal men who had, for the moſt part, more ambition than avarice, and who raiſed, by theſe means, a formidable party that might ſupport them in power. But in proceſs of time, and in favorable conjunctures, the contagion roſe higher, and ſpread ſtill wider; principal men

men became parties to the greateſt frauds; and the higheſt of thoſe who governed, and the loweſt of thoſe who were governed, contributed, in their degrees, to the univerſal rapine. The greateſt particular cheat, whereof any example can be found, was, I believe, that which arrears of ſubſidies to foreign princes, and arrears of pay to foreign troops, gave the opportunity and the means of executing.

I AM ſenſible, that the repreſentation I have made of the degeneracy of our age and people, may give occaſion to ſay, that the very things I have been pleading for are impracticable. It will be aſked what expectation can be entertained of raiſing a diſintereſted public ſpirit among men who have no other principle than that of private intereſt, who are individuals rather than fellow-citizens, who prey on one another, and are, in a ſtate of civil ſociety, much like to HOBBES's men in his ſuppoſed ſtate of nature? I muſt agree, tho unwillingly, that the enterprize is difficult. But the more difficult it is, if nothing leſs can relieve us from the load of debt we lie under, nor prevent the conſequences of lying under it much longer; every attempt to raiſe this ſpirit and to promote theſe meaſures, even the weakeſt, even mine, is commendable. The landed men are the true owners of our political veſſel: the moneyed men, as ſuch, are no more than paſſengers in it. To the firſt, therefore, all exhortations to aſſume this ſpirit ſhould be addreſſed. It is their part to ſet the example: and when they do ſo, they have a right to expect that the paſſengers ſhould contribute their proportion to ſave the veſſel. If they ſhould prove refractory; they muſt be told, that there is a law in behalf of the public, more ſacred and more antient too, for it is as antient as political ſociety, than all thoſe under the terms of which they would exempt themſelves from any reduction

of

of intereſt, and conſequently from any reimburſement of their principal; tho this reduction and this reimburſement be abſolutely neceſſary to reſtore the proſperity of the nation, and to provide for her ſecurity in the mean time. The law I mean, is that which nature and reaſon dictate, and which declares the preſervation of the commonwealth to be ſuperior to all other laws.

If ſuch a co-operation of the landed and moneyed intereſts is once brought about, the way will lie ſmooth before us, and a proſpect of national proſperity at the end of it will open before us yearly. Even the proſpect will be of great advantage both at home and abroad. We ſhall feel it in the riſe of our credit, in the confidence which our friends, and in the reſpect which our enemies, will have for us: a reſpect that will be due juſtly to a people who exert ſo much vigor in the midſt of ſo much diſtreſs, and take effectual meaſures to reſtore their national ſtrength, and to reſume their former dignity, inſtead of languiſhing on, under impotence and contempt.

The man, who is not fired by ſuch conſiderations as theſe, muſt have no elevation of mind, no love for his country, no regard for poſterity, nor the leaſt tincture of that public morality which diſtinguiſhes a good from a bad citizen. I know that futility, ignorance, and every kind of profligacy are general: but I know too that they are not univerſal, and therefore I do not deſpair. In all events, the merit of preſerving our country from beggary, is little inferior to that of preſerving it from ſlavery. They who engage therefore in ſo good a cauſe, and purſue it ſteadily in that public ſpirit, a revival of which can alone ſave this nation from miſery, from oppreſſion, and perhaps from confuſion, the uſual conſequence of the other two; they will deſerve better, I preſume to ſay, the title of

" ultimi

" ultimi Britannorum," even if they ſhould be defeated by the worſt ſubjects of Britain, than that uſurer BRUTUS, and that ſevere exactor of contributions, CASSIUS, deſerved the title of " ultimi Romanorum," when they were defeated in another manner by the worſt citizens of Rome.

AFTER all that has been ſaid in theſe papers, and all that might be ſaid, concerning the conduct of the houſe of Auſtria, from the reign of king WILLIAM to the preſent time; it may be proper to add ſomething by way of precaution, and to prevent very falſe concluſions, that many will be ready to draw from very true premiſſes.

IT is notoriouſly true, that a ſpirit of bigotry, of tyranny, and of avarice in the court of Vienna, maintained long the troubles in Hungary, which might have been appeaſed much ſooner than they were. Thus a great and conſtant diverſion was kept up in favor of France, even at the time when the two houſes of Auſtria and Bourbon were ſtruggling for that great prize, the Spaniſh ſucceſſion, till the French troops took poſſeſſion of Paſſau, and the malecontents of Hungary raiſed contributions in the very ſuburbs of Vienna.

IT is notoriouſly true, that we might have had nothing more than a defenſive war, as I have ſaid in the foregoing papers, to make againſt France, with an Auſtrian prince on the throne of Spain, at the death of CHARLES the ſecond; if the emperor LEOPOLD would have concurred in the wiſe and practicable meaſures which king WILLIAM propoſed.

IT is notoriouſly true, that we might have avoided the defeat at Almanza, and have ſupported much better the war in Spain; if a predilection for acquiſitions in Italy had not

determined the councils of Vienna to precipitate the evacuation of Mantua, wherein an army of French was blocked up after the battle of Turin, and which was let looſe in this manner, againſt the opinion of the queen and the ſtates general, time enough to beat us at Almanza.

FINALLY, for I will deſcend no more to particulars, it is notoriouſly true, that we might have taken Toulon, and have carried the war into the beſt provinces of France, for which queen ANNE had made, at a vaſt expence, all the neceſſary preparations; if the Auſtrians had not detached, in that very point of time, twelve thouſand men on the expedition to Naples, and if prince EUGENE had not ſhewn too viſibly, before perſons ſtill alive, that the taking of Toulon was the leaſt of his objects.

THESE facts are ſufficient to ſhew, how much the miſtaken policy of the court of Vienna has over-loaded her allies during more than half a century, and has defeated the great deſign which theſe allies, and Britain in particular, carried on for her at the expence of infinite blood and treaſure. Now there are many, in this kingdom, very ready to conclude from theſe facts, and from others of the ſame kind poſterior to theſe, that our experience ſhould teach us to neglect the intereſts of the houſe of Auſtria, and to be regardleſs of all that paſſes on the continent for the time to come. But ſurely ſuch concluſions are very falſe. The principle of our conduct has been right, and our manner of purſuing it alone wrong. It was our neglect of the general intereſt of Europe, from the Pyrenean treaty to the revolution of our government in one thouſand ſix hundred and eighty-eight, that gave to France a long opportunity, and the means of raiſing an exorbitant power. It has been zeal without knowledge, and a

ſtrange ſubſerviency to private intereſts, which have almoſt exhauſted this country, and defeated all our endeavours for the public good ſince that time. This we may alter. The principle of policy we cannot, as long as the diviſion of power and property in Europe continues the ſame. We are an iſland indeed: but if a ſuperior power gives the law to the continent, I apprehend that it will give it to us too in ſome great degree. Our forefathers apprehended, with reaſon, the exorbitant power of the houſe of Auſtria; and thought that the pretenſions of MARY queen of Scots might give, even when ſhe was a priſoner, opportunity and advantage, as they did no doubt, to this power to diſturb our peace, and even to invade our iſland. The exorbitant power of the two branches of the houſe of Bourbon give ſurely in this reſpect, as well as in others, at leaſt the ſame cauſe of apprehenſion now. It is, therefore, plainly our intereſt to maintain the rivalry between the families of Auſtria and of Bourbon; and for that purpoſe to aſſiſt the former on every occaſion againſt the latter, as far as the common cauſe of Europe, not her private ambition, requires; and as far as our national circumſtances may enable us to meaſure out our aſſiſtance in any conjuncture to her.

THESE are the meaſures and proportions, according to which alone political ſocieties ought to unite in alliances, and to aſſiſt one another. There is a political, as well as a natural, ſelf-love; and the former ought to be, to every member of a commonwealth, the ſame determining principle of action, where public intereſt is concerned, that the latter will be to him moſt certainly wherever his private intereſt is concerned. I have heard it often ſaid of one man, that he was a friend or an enemy to the houſe of Auſtria; and of another, that he was a friend or an enemy to the houſe of Bourbon. But theſe expreſſions pro-

ceed generally from paſſion and prepoſſeſſion, as the ſentiments they impute muſt proceed, whenever they are real, from theſe cauſes, or from one which is ſtill worſe, from corruption. A wiſe prince, and a wiſe people, bear no regard to other ſtates, except that which ariſes from the coincidence or repugnancy of their ſeveral intereſts; and this regard muſt therefore vary, as theſe intereſts will do, in the perpetual fluctuation of human affairs. Thus queen ELIZABETH and her people oppoſed the houſe of Auſtria, and ſupported the houſe of Bourbon, in the ſixteenth century. Thus queen ANNE and her people oppoſed the houſe of Bourbon, and ſupported the houſe of Auſtria, in the eighteenth. The firſt, indeed, was done with wiſer council; the laſt with greater force of arms. By the firſt, our country was enriched; by the laſt, it was impoveriſhed——

N. B. Theſe conſiderations were written thus far in the year ſeventeen hundred and forty-nine, but were never finiſhed.

THE

SUBSTANCE

OF SOME

LETTERS,

Written originally in FRENCH, about the Year 1720,

TO

Mr. de POUILLY.

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Mr. de POUILLY.

SINCE you are ſo curious to know what paſſed in a converſation lately between one of your acquaintance and myſelf, wherein you have been told that I maintained a very ſingular paradox; I will give you ſome account of it, a general and ſhort account, at leaſt, of the firſt part, and one more particular and more full of the laſt, which is called paradoxical. You led me firſt, in my retreat, to abſtract philoſophical reaſonings: and, tho it be late to begin them at forty years of age, when the mind has not been accuſtomed to them earlier, yet I have learned enough under ſo good a guide, not to be afraid of engaging in them, whenever the cauſe God and of natural religion is concerned.

THEY were both concerned, very deeply, on the occaſion you refer to. There had been much diſcourſe, in the company

pany that was preſent, concerning the abſurd opinions, which many theiſtical philoſophers entertained of old about the ſupreme Being. Many had been cited, and many reflections had been made on them, by ſeveral, when the diſpute became particular between * Damon and me, he denying, and I affirming, that there are ſufficient proofs of the exiſtence of one ſupreme Being, the firſt intelligent cauſe of all things. You may be ſure, I made uſe of thoſe you furniſhed me with by a geometrical application of the doctrine of final cauſes, which ſhews, in various inſtances, what numberleſs chances there are againſt one, that intelligence and deſign were employed in the production of each of theſe phaenomena.

When I could not ſilence my adverſary by theſe proofs, tho they carry probability up to a reaſonable, if not to an abſolute, certainty, I inſiſted on a proof which muſt give this certainty, I think, to every one who acknowledges that we are capable of demonſtrative knowledge. I argued, "à poſte-"riori," from the intuitive knowledge of ourſelves, and the ſenſitive knowledge of objects exterior to ourſelves, which we have, up to that demonſtrative knowledge of God's exiſtence, which we are able to acquire by a due uſe of our reaſon. Here we ſtuck a little, and he was ready to deny all ſenſitive knowledge, on the chimerical notions of father Malebranche, and ſome other philoſophers, without conſidering that he deprived himſelf, in denying the exiſtence of God, of thoſe expedients, by which the others pretended to account for the perception of the ideas of objects exterior to the mind, independently of any ſenſitive knowledge. I endeavoured to ſhew him, that to renounce ſenſitive knowledge, was to renounce, in ſome ſort, humanity, and to place ourſelves in ſome unknown rank, either above it, or below it. I

* I chooſe to call him by this feigned name here.

endeavoured to ſtate the true notion, by ſtating the true bounds, of ſenſitive knowledge, which is not ſufficient indeed to ſhew us the inward conſtitutions of ſubſtances, and their real eſſences; but which is ſufficient to prove to us their exiſtence, and to diſtinguiſh them by their effects. I concluded this article by quoting to him a paſſage in the logic of PORT-ROYAL, wherein it is ſaid, that no man ever doubted, in good earneſt, whether there is an earth, a ſun, and a moon, no more than he doubted, whether the whole is bigger than a part; that we may ſay, with our mouths, that we doubt of all theſe things, becauſe we may lie; but that we cannot oblige our minds to ſay ſo: from whence it is concluded, more generally than I ſhall conclude, that Pyrrhonians are not a ſect perſuaded of what they ſay, but a ſect of liars. He did not inſiſt much longer, but left me to purſue my argument from intuitive and ſenſitive knowledge, to a demonſtration of God's exiſtence, which great and fundamental truth reſults neceſſarily from a concurrence of all the kinds of human knowledge employed in the proof of it.

I WAS not interrupted by him in the courſe of this argument, nor did he attempt to break any links of this chain of demonſtration, but followed the example of all thoſe who refuſe to yield to it. They are ſo far from conſidering the degrees, the bounds, and within theſe, the ſufficiency, of human knowledge, that they aſk continually, and that others endeavour, very often, vainly to give them, knowledge concerning the divine nature and attributes particularly, which it is impoſſible and unneceſſary we ſhould have, even on the ſuppoſition that there is a God. Unable to break thro this demonſtration, they hope to weaken the effect of it, on themſelves and others, by ſounding high the difficulties that preſent themſelves whenever we reaſon on the manner of God's exiſtence, on

his attributes, on his providence, and on many points relative to theſe. That is, they will not receive a demonſtration, made according to the cleareſt and moſt diſtinct ideas that we have, and by the moſt preciſe connection of them, becauſe there are other things which we cannot demonſtrate, nor explain, for want of other ideas. This proceeding is ſo unreaſonable, that the atheiſt himſelf does not hold it on any other occaſion; but admits the truth of many propoſitions, tho he be unable to reſolve ſeveral difficulties that are, ſome way or other, relative to them. He reaſons on this important article of human knowledge, as he would be aſhamed to reaſon on any other.

I MIGHT have reſted the argument here, becauſe, tho there are ſecrets of the divine nature and oeconomy which human reaſon cannot penetrate, yet ſeveral of the objections to them, which atheiſts commonly make, even that of phyſical and moral evil, and the ſuppoſed unjuſt diſtribution of good and evil, which has been made in all ages, and which is now more prevalent than ever, by the joint endeavours of atheiſts and chriſtian divines, are eaſy to be refuted. Theſe ſubjects have been ſo often treated between you and me, that I ſhall ſay nothing of them here, tho I did not decline them there. On the contrary, if I do not flatter myſelf, I ſaid enough to defeat the attack of the atheiſt, and to diſappoint the treachery of the divine. After which I inſiſted, with great reaſon ſurely on my ſide, that theſe difficulties, and more of the ſame ſort, were ſo little able to embaraſs the theiſt, that, inſtead of being repugnant to his ſyſtem, a neceſſary conſequence of it is, that ſuch difficulties ſhould ariſe. He is ſo little ſurpriſed to find them, that he would be ſurpriſed not to find them. In demonſtrating, to him, the exiſtence of God, his reaſon has not demonſtrated to him a being little raiſed above humanity,

and about whom he may always aſſume on human ideas, ſuch as the divinities of the heathen were. She has demonſtrated to him the exiſtence of an all perfect ſelf-exiſtent being, the ſource of all exiſtence, inviſible and incomprehenſible; the author, not only of all that is viſible and comprehenſible to his creatures, but of all that is, in the whole extent of nature, whether viſible or comprehenſible to them or not. From hence he concludes, and well he may, that there muſt be many phaenomena phyſical and moral for which he can, and many for which he cannot, account. The ſyſtem of God's attributes being, like the exerciſe of them, infinite, and our ſyſtem of ideas and of mental operations being very narrow and imperfect, it follows neceſſarily, that ſome few parts of the former ſyſtem are proportionable to the latter, and that a multitude of others are not ſo. A theiſt may ſuffer himſelf to be led into difficulties; but the atheiſt, take what ſyſtem of atheiſm you pleaſe, muſt fall into abſurdity, and be obliged to aſſert what implies contradiction.

I CONSIDERED the ſupreme Being, in all I ſaid, as a firſt intelligent cauſe, and as the creator of the univerſe. From hence my antagoniſt took occaſion to ridicule what theiſtical poets, philoſophers, and legiſlators have advanced concerning the firſt principles or the beginning of things, and the operations of a divine wiſdom and power, in the production of them, as if they had been cotemporary hiſtorians and ſpectators of what they related moſt affirmatively and circumſtantially. I joined with him, for the moſt part, in giving them this ridicule, and expreſſed myſelf with a juſt indignation againſt them, for attempting to impoſe ſo many fictions on mankind, and for preſuming to account for the proceedings of infinite wiſdom and power, by the whimſies of their own imaginations. He did not ſpare MOSES, nor I PLATO. But

when he went ſo far as to deny, on the ſtrength of a very weak ſophiſm, that we are obliged to aſcribe the creation or formation of the world to intelligence and wiſdom, he turned, I think, the ridicule on himſelf, for he reaſoned thus:

When you inveſtigate the proceedings of nature, you obſerve certain means, that ſeem, to you, proportioned to certain ends. You perceive too, that you cannot imitate nature any other way than by proportioning means to ends, and thus you frame that complex idea of wiſdom, to which you aſcribe the phaenomena, and the imaginary final cauſes of them. But you are groſsly miſtaken when you aſſume, that nature acts by ſuch means as ſeem to you proportioned to theſe ends. Here is a clock which marks the hours and minutes, and ſtrikes regularly, at certain periods, a certain number of times. The inward conſtruction of this clock is unknown to you. But you ſee one made, which, by the means of certain weights, produces all the ſame effects. Will you aſſert now, that the motions of the firſt clock are regulated by weights, becauſe thoſe of the ſecond are ſo? You will be much deceived if you do, for the motions of the firſt clock are produced and regulated by a ſpring.

This argument would have ſome force in oppoſition to ſuch naturaliſts as Strato of Lampſacus, as Des Cartes, and as others who have made hypothetical worlds, and have pretended to account for all the phaenomena by ſuch laws of matter and motion as they have thought fit to eſtabliſh. But in the preſent caſe it is a mere paralogiſm, and unworthy of the man who imployed it, ſince it ſerves to explain and confirm that very reaſoning which it is intended to oppoſe. The ſame motions are produced indeed by different means, but ſtill theſe different means are proportioned alike to the ſame end, which

proves the very thing I would prove, the intelligence of a workman.

When we had done ſpeaking of philoſophers who admit the beginning of the world, we proceeded to thoſe who deny it; and Damon ſeemed to think himſelf ſtrongly intrenched in the ſyſtem of it's eternity. As we cannot conceive, ſaid he, that matter was created and brought out of nothing, ſo we cannot conceive, neither that matter could of itſelf produce motion, nor that matter and motion together could produce thought. But there ariſes from hence no neceſſity of aſſuming, that there is any ſuperior being. Matter, motion, thought are eternal, and have been always what they are. The ſame nature, and the ſame courſe of things, that exiſt actually, have always exiſted.

To this it was eaſy to anſwer, that if I agreed with him in owning the eternity of the world, this conceſſion would not infirm the proofs I had brought of an eternal Being, diſtinct from the world, as the workman is from his work. We may allow the world to be eternal, without allowing that it is the ſole eternal Being. All that exiſts, has a cauſe of it's exiſtence, either out of itſelf, or in itſelf. It has no cauſe of it's exiſtence out of itſelf, if it is the ſole eternal Being. It has this cauſe then within itſelf, and exiſts by the neceſſity of it's own nature. The atheiſt affirms then, that it is impoſſible to conceive that this world ſhould not exiſt; or ſhould exiſt any otherwiſe than it does exiſt, both in matter and in form. This ſeems to me infinitely abſurd; for the atheiſt either has no ideas in his mind when he pronounces theſe words, "exiſts by "the neceſſity of it's nature;" or he underſtands ſuch a neceſſity of exiſtence, that a ſuppoſition of the contrary would imply contradiction. If the atheiſt ſays, he has no idea of ſuch a ne-

neceſſity, he has then no idea of the eternity of the world. If he ſays, as DAMON did ſay, that he can no more conceive this world not to exiſt, or to exiſt differently from it's preſent exiſtence, than he can conceive the equality of twice two to four not to exiſt, he ſays nothing to the purpoſe; ſince the neceſſity of exiſtence, according to him, cannot be admitted till he has given us another definition of what we are to underſtand by theſe words; and another definition, intelligible and reaſonable, I think, he never will be able to give.

AFTER having puſhed this argument beyond reply, which I borrowed but did not weaken, I added, that ARISTOTLE, and other antient philoſophers, who believed the world eternal, did not fall into the abſurdity of believing it uncauſed. They believed it eternal, in the order of time, but they believed it the effect of a ſuperior cauſe, in the order of cauſality. The diſtinction is, perhaps, too metaphyſical, but it ſerves to ſhew, ſince they made it, to what ſhifts they were driven in maintaining the eternity of the world, and how little reaſon the modern atheiſt has to lean on their authority.

FROM refuting his opinions, I was led to advance one of my own, and to aſſert, that this fact, "The world had a be-"ginning," is a fact, founded on ſuch a tradition, as no reaſonable man can refuſe to accept. This is the paradox, in advancing of which, I had, not only DAMON, but almoſt all thoſe who were preſent, againſt me. It took up the reſt of our converſation, and I will tell you, not only what I ſaid, to ſupport my opinion then, but what has come into my thoughts upon the ſame ſubject ſince.

THO

THO we cannot have, ſtrictly ſpeaking, a certain knowledge of any fact whereof we have not been ourſelves witneſſes, yet are there ſeveral ſuch facts whereof we cannot doubt. High probability muſt ſtand often in lieu of certainty, or we muſt be, every moment, at a loſs how to form our opinions and to regulate our conduct. Such is our condition, and we cannot think it unreaſonably impoſed, ſince we are able, by a right uſe of our reaſon, to aſcend thro various degrees from abſolute improbability, which is little diſtant from evident falſhood, to that degree of probability which is little diſtant from evident truth. On this principle let us proceed to conſider, how high this propoſition, "The world had a beginning," ſtands in the ſcale of probability. We ſhall find, perhaps, that it ſtands too high to have the propoſition paſs for a paradox, when I have told you what was ſaid in converſation, and what has occurred to me ſince, on the ſame ſubject.

AN hiſtorical fact, which contains nothing that contradicts general experience, and our own obſervation, has already the appearance of probability; and, if it be ſupported by the teſtimony of proper witneſſes, it acquires all the appearances of truth; that is, it becomes really probable in the higheſt degree. A fact, on the other hand, which is repugnant to experience, ſhocks us from the firſt; and if we receive it afterwards for a true fact, we receive it on outward authority, not on inward conviction. Now to do ſo is extremely abſurd; ſince the ſame experience that contradicts this particular fact, affirms this general fact, that men lie very often, and that their authority alone is a very frail foundation of aſſent.

IT may ſeem a little extraordinary, and perhaps chimerical, to our firſt thoughts, to examine which is moſt conformable to experience, the eternity of the world, or the beginning of it

it in time; and it would be really ſo, if, to conſtitute this conformity to experience, it were ſtrictly neceſſary, on every occaſion, to cite a fact of ſimilar kind. But there is no ſuch neceſſity in the nature of things, and this conformity may be ſufficiently conſtituted otherwiſe. Were it not ſo, our ignorance would produce very contrary effects, equally abſurd; for this mother of ſuperſtitious credulity, would be the mother likewiſe of moſt unreaſonable incredulity.

THE probability of a fact, whereof there are frequent and notorious examples, may force our aſſent at once, like thoſe which happen conſtantly in the ordinary courſe of things. But ſtill it is true, that a fact of which we find no preciſe example within our knowledge, may have a conformity, properly ſo called, with our experience. The probability ariſing from this ſort of conformity will not be perceived, indeed, ſo ſoon as the other, but when it is perceived, will determine alike. This caſe may be compared to that of the mathematician, who arrives at truth by a long proceſs of demonſtration, and who can doubt of this truth afterward, no more than he doubted of thoſe ſelf-evident truths which carry inſtantaneous conviction to the mind.

A FACT may be, in the reſpect we ſpeak of here, indifferent. We may diſcover, in our experience, none of the ſame ſort; and yet none that imply contradiction with it. Such a fact, therefore, is merely new; and experience will be far from teaching us to reject any fact on this account alone. When ſuch facts, therefore, new to us, according to the extent of our knowledge, but not ſo to other men, are atteſted by credible witneſſes, he muſt act very unreaſonably, who refuſes to give that degree of aſſent to them, which is proportionable to the credibility of the witneſſes. Again, the fact may be conform-

able

able to experience by a certain analogy phyſical or moral, if not by particular examples, and may be admitted therefore, on proper teſtimony, more eaſily ſtill, than one of thoſe which I called indifferent. One reſts wholly on teſtimony, but experience gives to the other an indirect, if not a direct, confirmation.

Let me quote a ſtory, which will ſerve to illuſtrate all I have been ſaying. A certain king of Siam was firmly perſuaded that Sommona-Codom had ſtraddled over the gulph of Bengal; that the print of his right foot was ſeen at Pra-bat, and that of his left foot at Lanca. This pious legend was certainly repugnant to his majeſty's experience, the firſt foundation of probability: and he fell into the abſurdity of believing it on the moſt precarious of human authorities, the authority of his prieſts, who had taught him, perhaps, that the merit of his faith in the legend of Sommona-Codom increaſed as the probability of what it contained diminiſhed. When the Dutch ambaſſador aſſured the ſame prince, that the ſurface of the water hardened ſo much in his country, during the winter, that men, and beaſts, and heavy carriages paſſed over it, the prince treated him as a liar. He knew no example of this kind: and the ſeeming nonconformity to experience, in this caſe, had the effect which the real nonconformity to experience ſhould have had in the other. I call this a ſeeming nonconformity; becauſe altho the good Siameſe knew no example, in point, of what the ambaſſador told him, yet he might have reflected on ſeveral particular objects of his knowledge, that would have brought it up to a real conformity. He knew, for I think the art of caſting cannon was known in his country, that extreme heat could give fluidity to the hardeſt metals: from whence he might have concluded, very naturally, that extreme cold was capable of producing a very

contrary effect, that of condenſing and hardening fluid ſubſtances. In his country there was no ice; but he knew that there fell ſometimes on the neighbouring mountains of Ava, of Pegu, and of Laos, a certain white cold and ſolid ſubſtance, which was nothing elſe than water, condenſed and hardened in one ſeaſon, and melting and flowing in another. He was a man of good ſenſe, they ſay, and therefore we may believe that theſe conſiderations diſcovering to him a real, tho not exact, conformity to his experience, he gave credit to the Dutchman afterwards.

Let us conſider now, on our part, whether there are not facts that contain all that is neceſſary to eſtabliſh the higheſt probability, tho there are no examples of the ſame, and tho we ſhould allow, that a bare non-repugnancy to experience, or a ſtrong analogy to it, do not afford ſufficient grounds of probability. Suppoſe then a fact, preſerved in hiſtory or tradition, which has the two conditions of non-repugnancy and of analogy, and the contrary to which cannot be aſſerted without abſurdity. If the negative be abſurd, is it not agreeable to right reaſon that we adhere to the affirmative?

It may be ſaid, perhaps, that the ſuppoſition I make cannot have place in hiſtorical facts, that theſe are in ſome ſort arbitrary, they may be affirmed or denied, according to the credibility of the teſtimony. That Julius Caesar conquered the Britons, or that Genghiz-Can conquered China, may be true; but it may be true, likewiſe, that Caesar was beat by the Britons, and that Genghiz-Can did not even march into China. It may be ſaid, that when ſuch facts, as we meet with frequently in the romances of all kinds, are concerned, we may affirm that the contrary is true, or that no ſuch events ever happened; but that it will not follow, that an hiſtorical or tra-

traditional fact is true, becauſe it appears to us, that to ſuppoſe the contrary is abſurd. I enter no further into this diſquiſition, but I content myſelf to ſay, that there is, at leaſt, one ſuch fact conveyed to us by tradition, the truth of which we muſt admit, becauſe it is abſurd to aſſume the contrary, and becauſe one or the other muſt be neceſſarily true. The fact I mean is this, that the world, we inhabit, had a beginning in time, and the ſame may be ſaid of our whole ſolar ſyſtem, and of the whole ſyſtem of the univerſe. Now this fact being denied very dogmatically, and there neither being nor ever having been any living cotemporary human teſtimony for it or againſt it, we muſt, I think, be decided in this caſe, by conſidering, whether the beginning or eternity of the world implies any contradiction with what we know, or is repugnant to our cleareſt, moſt diſtinct, and beſt determined ideas. One of theſe facts muſt be true, ſince the world exiſts actually. If it can be ſhewn, therefore, that the opinion of its eternity is an abſurd opinion, I muſt be convinced that it had a commencement.

To prove the abſurdity of the former, there ſeems to be a very obvious method, and an argument the more concluſive, becauſe it is, in oppoſition to the atheiſt, an argument "ad "hominem," an argument drawn from the only ſolution of one of the greateſt difficulties which the theiſt propoſes to him. If this ſolution be not good, he remains without a reply, and if it be good, as I think indeed that it is ſufficient to anſwer this particular difficulty, there ariſes from it an argument againſt himſelf, much ſtronger than that which the theiſt oppoſed to him, and which I am ready to acknowledge, that he has fully anſwered. What is here ſaid, requires to be explained by a deduction of particulars.

He who denies the commencement, and aſſerts the eternity of the world, muſt believe that this planet of ours has been, from all eternity, ſuch as we ſee that it is. I ſay, that he muſt believe it to be ſo, ſince, if he admitted ſuch changes in it as had overturned the whole order of phyſical nature, deſtroyed all the ſpecies of animals, and confounded all the elements in a new chaos, the diſpute would be over, and he convicted, at once, of the groſſeſt abſurdity, becauſe a God, a Δημιουργος, would be as neceſſary in this caſe, as in that of an original creation. In ſhort, ſuch a renewal of the world requiring no leſs wiſdom and power than the formation of it, the diſpute, on the atheiſt's part, would ſink into a cavil about words. He is obliged therefore to maintain, that this planet of ours has been always, upon the whole, much what it is; that there have been, from eternity, the ſame general laws, and the ſame order of phyſical nature; an infinite ſucceſſion of material cauſes and effects, blind cauſes of uniform effects, uniform in kind, if not in degree; cauſes, which have been effects; effects, which become cauſes in their turn, and proceed in this manner round the circle of eternity. When we quote to the atheiſt the univerſal conſent of tradition, in affirming that the world had a beginning, he laughs at the proof. Whether he has any right to do ſo, will be ſeen preſently. In the mean time, we cannot be ſurpriſed that he, who rejects a demonſtration, ſhould pay no regard to a tradition; but we may be well ſurpriſed, when, following the atheiſt on, we find him calling tradition to his aid, and leaning wholly upon it.

If the world is eternal, why does our knowledge of it go no further back, why have we not more antient memorials, ſays the divine? The ſame reaſon, ſays the atheiſt, which hinders us from having records, where we have any, beyond

two or three thouſand years in a ſpace of five or ſix thouſand, to which, according to you, the antiquity of the world extends, is juſt as good to hinder us from ſeeing further backwards, in a longer, and even in an infinite ſpace of time. Now here theology comes in to the aid of atheiſm, as it does upon more occaſions than this. The hiſtory, which is aſcribed to the legiſlator of the Jews, and which it is required that we ſhould believe implicitly, aſſures us, that the world was once entirely drowned; and thro the whole courſe of ſacred, as well as profane, ſcriptures, we hear of other inundations, of earthquakes, of plagues, of devaſtations of countries, and of captivities of people, by all, or ſome of which, not only numbers of men have been deſtroyed, but whole political ſocieties have been loſt. Thus the atheiſt has it in his power to make the ſame uſe of holy writ, which the divine makes of profane hiſtory; that is, he adopts whatever makes for his purpoſe, and rejects whatever does not. He finds antient governments frequently diſſolved, and new ones riſing. The records of the former, as well as their laws and cuſtoms, periſh with them. The latter remain often very long in ignorance and barbarity, and have not the means, nor even the deſire, of conveying the events of their own time, nor the traditions of former times by authentic records to poſterity. He will not fail to obſerve, that all we know of antient hiſtory, except thoſe broken ſcraps of it which Jewiſh traditions mention, has come down to us from the Greeks; that many centuries paſſed, after the deluge, before Cadmus, or any one elſe, carried the uſe of letters to this people; and that this people, not having employed them to write hiſtory till many centuries afterwards, it is not aſtoniſhing that we know as little as we do concerning times more antient than thoſe. The atheiſt triumphs in this anſwer to the divine, and tho no man abhors his cauſe more than I do, I think him thus far in the right. But the

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ſcene will ſoon change, if a theiſt interpoſes. His anſwer to the divine's queſtion will indeed ſtand good, but out of this very anſwer there will ariſe a deciſive argument againſt him.

When the atheiſt has ſounded the deluge of Deucalion high, and admitted, for the ſake of his argument, that of Noah; when he has added to theſe, all thoſe other deluges, of which tradition ſpeaks, that of Xisuthrus, that of Ogyges, that which the Chineſe annals mention, that whereof the prieſts of Sais informed Solon, and that, if it was not the ſame, whereof the memory had been preſerved among the people of America, beſides a multitude of devaſtations of other kinds, he will think himſelf very ſtrong. But the theiſt may aſk him a very puzling queſtion, Was there any thing ſupernatural in the production of theſe terrible cataſtrophes? The divine might anſwer, that there was; but he could not: for if he did, he would acknowledge the exiſtence of a ſupreme Being, which he denies. It remains then, that all he has ſaid about the immutable order and laws of nature, which have maintained the world in much the ſame ſtate, and ſuch as it is, from all eternity, muſt paſs for nothing, and the theiſt will inſiſt, that if ſuch events as theſe, which tend directly to the diſſolution of our planet, and the extermination of the whole human race, have been produced ſo often, in five or ſix thouſand years, by the action of blind cauſes, matter and motion alone, it is repugnant to common ſenſe to believe, either that ſuch events have not happened an infinite number of times, in an infinite ſpace of time; or that having ſo happened, they ſhould not have once deſtroyed the world entirely, and made the ſuppoſition of a God neceſſary to reſtore it to the ſtate in which we ſee it. The theiſt will inſiſt futher againſt the atheiſt, that it is abſurd to confine theſe phaenomena to ſuch bounds, and to accompany them with juſt ſuch circumſtances

ſtances as ſuit his purpoſe. The purpoſe of the atheiſt required that theſe deſtructions of mankind ſhould happen often enough to defend his hypotheſis againſt that queſtion, Why have we not more antient memorials of the world, and of the inhabitants of it? What his purpoſe required, is exactly anſwered, by the eternal complaiſance of blind material cauſes. The world was never entirely deſtroyed nor mankind entirely exterminated, nor any neceſſity created of a God to reſtore them. But there have been as many of theſe deſtructions, as may be improved to extricate the atheiſt out of the difficulty which is laid in his way.

The divine would ſit down well ſatisfied with the ſtate to which, I ſuppoſe, the diſpute is reduced by the theiſt, if he had nothing more at heart, than to maintain the exiſtence of God, by maintaining the commencement of the world. But he has ſomething more at heart, it muſt have commenced, it muſt have been renewed, and it muſt have been repeopled, in the manner Moses relates, and juſt at the time which he fixes, according to the calculations that learned men have grounded on the genealogies contained in the book of Geneſis. For this purpoſe a ſyſtem has been invented by crouding profane into the extent of ſacred chronology, and by making as many anecdotes of the former, as can be ſo made, ſeem to coincide with thoſe of the latter. Divines would be thought to prove the latter by concurrent evidence; but in reality they aſſume it to be true, and by this aſſumption alone, can the violence, with which they drag profane anecdotes to their purpoſe, be in any ſort excuſed. That I may not quote to you any of thoſe numberleſs heavy writers, who have taken this taſk upon them, I will bring forward on this occaſion Mr. de Meaux, the honor of the Gallican or rather of the chriſtian church, and the ſhame of that of Rome. This writer, who

poſſeſſed in the higheſt degree the talent of ſeducing the imagination, when he could not convince the judgment, running over, in his diſcourſe on univerſal hiſtory, thoſe ages which ſuceeded the deluge, in a very agreeable manner, but on very precarious authority, makes no ſcruple of affirming, that there is no antient hiſtory wherein the marks of a new world do not appear manifeſtly in theſe early times, and long after them. Theſe endeavours to confirm the Moſaic ſyſtem by a multitude of uncertain traditions, as well as the hiſtory itſelf, compiled, no doubt, from other traditions, might be ſufficient to take all authority from tradition, if theſe authors did not miſtake the notion of it, and if a juſt diſtinction, that ought to be made, did not eſcape them.

Tradition is firſt oral, the firſt authors of it unknown: and when it comes afterwards into hiſtory, the genealogical deſcent of it nothing more than tradition, and we muſt ſay, in general, very abſurdly, that it proves itſelf, or, very truly, that it has no proof at all. From hence it follows, that parparticular circumſtantial facts, conveyed to us by particular traditions, are deſtitute of hiſtorical proof. But ſtill it will be agreeable to nature and reaſon, that the unanimous concurrence of many traditions, to which no contrary traditions can be oppoſed, may conſtitute the truth of a general fact. Public report, as Pliny the younger obſerves, relates facts in the groſs, and naked of circumſtances. So it muſt do, to deſerve any credit; and ſo does this tradition, that the world had a beginning. It is rather a fact, reſulting from the concurrence of traditions, than a fact founded on the authority of any. Nothing can be leſs credible than all that we read in antient ſtory, about the Aſſyrians for inſtance. It is a wild heap of inconſiſtent traditions which cannot be reconciled, nor verified for want of an hiſtorical criterion. Cteſias, it is

is ſaid, boaſted that he had extracted the materials of his hiſtory, whilſt he was in the ſervice of the king of Perſia, out of the authentic records of that monarchy. But his account, thoſe of other greek writers, and even thoſe of the old teſtament, are ſo contrary to one another, and, on the whole, ſo improbable, that they may be all comprehended under the name of Aſſyriacs, which Aristotle brought into proverbial uſe, and which was meant to ſignify all ſorts of fabulous relations. What are we now to believe in this caſe? Not any particular tradition, to be ſure; but thus much, in general, that there was an empire once founded in Aſia, to which the Aſſyrians gave their name.

These traditions, thoſe of Egypt, and many of Greece, come from thoſe dark ages which may be called heroical or fabulous, after Varro the moſt learned of the Romans. More modern Greeks, like ecchoes, repeated theſe traditions, and, in repeating, multiplied them all, ſo that the ſound of them rings ſtill in our ears, and they remain objects of learned curioſity. Shall we give credit now to the traditions, that came down from fabulous ages, about the expedition of the Argonauts; about the war of Thebes, and that of Troy; about the adventures of Hercules, of Theseus, and a multitude of other romantic ſtories? No, moſt certainly. It would be ridiculous to give credit to any of them. But it is not ridiculous, it is reaſonable, to be perſuaded that they had ſome foundation in the truth of things. Every tradition, conſidered apart, may be ſafely denied; becauſe no one of them has an hiſtorical proof: but yet a truth, which may be called with little impropriety hiſtorical, reſults from the combination of all theſe fabulous traditions. There were no doubt, in unknown ages, maritime expeditions, famous leagues, cruel wars, and heroes who rendered their names illuſtrious.

ONE tradition reports, that PERSEUS carried a colony into the eaſt; another, that TITHONUS did the ſame "uſque ad "Aethiopas," as far as the Indies. Is not the voyage of Io, daughter of INACHUS, into Egypt long before, and the expedition of the Cimmerians into Aſia long after, famous in tradition? Many others of the ſame kind might be mentioned; and tho they are all fabulous, they leave no reaſon to doubt, that arts and ſciences, and even barbarity, were carried from the weſt to the eaſt, as well as from the eaſt to the weſt, in ages quite unknown to us; which is enough to ſhake the authority of that particular hiſtory wherein it is reported, that the world was repeopled from one ſpot, and by one family, after an univerſal deluge. But I need inſiſt on this head no longer. So many general truths, of which it is impoſſible to doubt, reſult from the concurrence of fabulous traditions, that there remains no reaſon to doubt of the truth of this fact, "The world had a beginning."

WILL it be ſaid, that if there has been ſuch a tradition, it has not been ſo univerſal as to eſtabliſh this truth, according to my rule? Leſt this ſhould be ſaid, it is neceſſary that I prove the univerſality of it; and that by ſhewing, particularly, for what reaſons we admit other facts to be true, tho founded only on tradition, it may appear that the beginning of the world is ſtill better founded, and this important tradition advantageouſly diſtinguiſhed from all others.

WHILST I am writing on this ſubject, to you, a diſſertation, I had never ſeen before, is fallen into my hands. The author * of it pretends not only to prove, that the world had a beginning, but alſo, that this beginning was the ſame which MOSES

* JACQUELOT.

Moses gives it. He is ſo fond of the ſecond propoſition, that he employs all his ſkill and all his learning to eſtabliſh it. He ventures to aſſert, that the hiſtory of the world was very well known, when that of Moses became public by the ſpreading of the goſpel; that profane hiſtory agreed with ſacred, in this reſpect, and did not reach beyond the bounds Moses had ſet. One would think that theſe writers imagine, for this writer is a divine too, that none but themſelves can read, and that they have ſtill the advantage, which they had before the reſurrection of letters, the advantage of impoſing whatever they pleaſe on an ignorant world. The world had a beginning; tradition proves it had. But tradition is far from proving that it began, either in the manner Moses relates, or at the time which he is thought to have fixed. Profane and ſacred hiſtory were as little agreed, when chriſtianity was publiſhed and the Jewiſh ſcriptures were better known, as they are at this time; notwithſtanding all the pains taken by Josephus, Eusebius, and others, to reconcile them; and notwithſtanding all the pains that have been taken, by modern ſcholars, to confirm ſacred by profane anecdotes.

Let us neglect ſuch writers, therefore, who make a ſhew of learning, always futile, and often falſe. Let us examine and compare for ourſelves; look into the authors they cite; but truſt neither their citations nor their reaſonings. Diodorus the Sicilian, and Strabo, in the reign of Augustus; Pliny and Plutarch in thoſe of Vespasian and Trajan, very reſpectable authors certainly, give us a different idea of their knowledge in the hiſtory of the world, from that which the author of this diſſertation would give us. They knew a little better than this modern writer, what hiſtories and what traditions they had of any authenticity. They made no great account of thoſe canticles or hymns, of thoſe inſcriptions and

other expedients, which had been employed, in more early times, to preſerve the memory of paſt events, and concerning which the writer we refer to, enters into a chimerical and tireſome detail. Theſe antient writers looked on their hiſtories to be more modern, and their traditions to be more antient, than our tribe of ſcholars would make them, the laſt eſpecially. That profound antiquity, wherein theſe men affect dogmatically to make great diſcoveries, with very particular and critical exactneſs, was, for the others, a dark abyſs, wherein they ſaw but few objects, and thoſe few rather general than particular, and, on the whole very imperfect. They acknowledged, that the firſt of the greek hiſtorians had writ no earlier than the time about which the Perſians began to make their expeditions into Europe. They confeſſed, that neighbouring nations had ſome hiſtorical monuments of a much greater antiquity; but they confeſſed too, that theſe monuments were very imperfect and very precarious, broken into diſcordant anecdotes, and mingled up with romance and poetical fiction. In a word, they owned themſelves able to pierce a very little way into antiquity: but none of them pretended, that the bounds of their hiſtorical knowledge were the bounds of antiquity. Let us ſee now, whether the beginning of the world may not be, even at this time, reputed equivalent to the beſt eſtabliſhed hiſtorical fact, notwithſtanding the avowed ignorance of the moſt learned and curious inquirers, who wrote, two thouſand years ago, about the beginning of nations, and much more of the world.

The Egyptians ſeem to have been reputed the moſt antient, or one of the moſt antient, nations of the world, by the Greeks, from whom all our knowledge of profane hiſtory deſcends. They gave to their nation an immenſe antiquity, and in part, perhaps, fabulous. But I am at a loſs, however, to diſcover what

what means, and therefore what right, the ſcholars of theſe ages have to decide, as dogmatically as they have done, about the egyptian dynaſties. Why, for inſtance, the jeſuit Petavius required that we ſhould, upon his word, reject them all? Or, why the author of the diſſertation, after touching the matter very lightly and very ſuperficially, ſhould expect to be believed, when he conjectures that there were no monuments of egyptian antiquity later than Moeris, tho he has in this the authority of as great a man as Marsham on his ſide? Dicearchus, the diſciple of Aristotle, who had not, moſt certainly inſpired him with much credulity in antient traditions, had ſtudied the antiquities of Egypt. Manetho had done the ſame in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and Eratosthenes in the time of Ptolemy Evergetes. The firſt of the two was himſelf an Egyptian, and had extracted his chronology and hiſtory from the books of Mercury, that is, from the ſacred and moſt authentic writings of the Egyptians. Why has his chronology been called in queſtion, or why was it not received by chriſtian writers beyond a certain epocha? Is there any pretence to ſay, that he altered what he found in the books of Mercury; as we know that Julius Africanus, and Eusebius, altered and tranſpoſed his dynaſties, to make them, as near as they could, conformable to the moſaic chronology? With what front can we ſuſpect the authenticity of books, compiled and preſerved by egyptian prieſts, when we receive the old teſtament on the faith of jewiſh ſcribes, a moſt ignorant and lying race? Were the ſacred books of the Egyptians taken from them, by a king of Perſia? Diodorus ſays it. But the ſame Diodorus aſſures us, that the Egyptians purchaſed their ſcriptures again, and that they were reſtored to them by the eunuch Bagoas: whereas the ſcriptures of the Jews were loſt, more than once; and how they were recovered, the laſt time at leaſt, is unknown to us: nay,

nay, whether they were recovered at all, in a ſtrict ſenſe, may be, and has been, queſtioned by ſome Chriſtians and Jews too. Is the immenſe antiquity, which MANETHO aſcribed to his nation, or the tales of OSIRIS, and ISIS, and TYPHON, too ridiculous to be admitted? I ſhall not plead in favor of them. But, in truth, are the anecdotes of jewiſh antiquity a whit more conformable to experience, to reaſon, and to all our notions of things divine or human, whatever regard we may pay to ſome paſſages in the Pentateuch, becauſe of the uſe to which they are put by theology. No man, who has the leaſt pretence to candor, and who dares ſpeak out, will aſſert ſo much. But ſtill, how little credit ſoever we may give to the particular traditions of either ſort, all of them together are the general voice of antiquity, and extort our aſſent to this truth, "The world had a beginning."

THIS truth ſeems to have been propagated by them in thoſe hieroglyphs, and that ſacred language, wherein they recorded whatever was moſt antient and moſt reſpected. HORUS, or the world, was repreſented like a youth whoſe beard was not yet grown. An egg was the famous ſymbol of the generation, as well as figure, of the world; and the Thebans, who were the moſt antient egyptian dynaſty, had an hieroglyphical repreſentation of the Divinity with an egg coming out of his mouth; which ſymbol of an egg was adopted by the Phoenicians, and by the Perſians, and became an object of worſhip in the orgia, or myſteries of BACCHUS. Theſe monuments came down from the firſt MERCURY, at whoſe antiquity we cannot ſo much as gueſs; for the ſecond, who followed, and probably very long after him, our chronologers are obliged to place as high as the age of MOSES or of JOSHUA.

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SANCHONIATHON, that we may ſay ſomething of phoenician as well as egyptian traditions of this ſort, is another author that may vie, perhaps, with the moſt antient for antiquity. BOCHART, and all our divines, think fit to place him in the time of GIDEON. It is not convenient for them that he ſhould ſtand backwarder. They build their aſſertion on a paſſage concerning him in the writings of PORPHYRY, who ſays, that SANCHONIATHON had the materials of his hiſtory from JEROMBAL, a prieſt of the God JAO. Now JEROMBAL ſounds too like to JERUBAAL, the name GIDEON wears in ſcripture, and JAO ſounds too like JEHOVAH, to leave any doubt on this ſubject in the minds of men who can make ſyſtems and write volumes on the affinity of ſounds. SANCHONIATHON then, being cotemporary to GIDEON, had a knowledge of the books of MOSES, and took from thence all he knew concerning the beginning of the world; ſo that theſe two are but one and the ſame tradition, according to this opinion. But there is great reaſon to doubt of the firſt part, and the ſecond is evidently falſe.——The anachroniſm of PORPHYRY, who ſuppoſed SEMIRAMIS cotemporary with the ſiege of Troy, will not make SANCHONIATHON cotemporary with GIDEON: ſince the laſt was, unluckily, not a prieſt, and ſince the JEROMBAL, from whoſe writings the phoenician hiſtorian is ſaid to have borrowed, was one. The anſwers made to this objection are trifling. A pagan, it is ſaid, might take a general of an army for a prieſt, and PORPHYRY was guilty of this blunder. The Jews called their chiefs or principal men ſometimes prieſts, it is ſaid. Therefore PORPHYRY, who was no more a Jew than he was a Chriſtian, might make uſe of an appellation peculiar to the Jews.—But, further, in what time ſoever SANCHONIATHON lived, he did not relate what he ſaid concerning the commencement of the world from the moſaic hiſtory, or any other jewiſh traditions; ſince he

he affirmed positively that he derived he cosmogony from TAAUT or MERCURY. Have we not reason to be surprised, as much as we are accustomed to it, at the boldness of scholars who presume to oppose their frivolous conjectures, to what an historian himself says of the materials which he followed?—The second part of what is said concerning this phoenician historian being false, it follows that SANCHONIATHON, one of the most antient writers whose name is come down to us, SANCHONIATHON, a lover and follower of truth, according to the etymology of his name, learned and curious in searching the original of things, furnished with the most authentic materials that Egypt and Phoenicia could afford him, and writing in an age when the authenticity of these materials might be known, affirmed the beginning of the world; and is, therefore, a voucher of the same truth, distinct from MOSES.

WHETHER the books of the Pentateuch were writ by MOSES himself, or whether the traditions contained in them were compiled after his time, which is not at all improbable; certain it is, that these traditions are of very great antiquity. Now these traditions confirm the same general fact, in a more circumstantial account of it, than we may suppose that SANCHONIATHON gave. I have read that SIMPLICIUS laughed at the whole Story, and at GRAMMATICUS for quoting some passages of it. This interpreter of ARISTOTLE affirmed, that the whole was taken from egyptian fables. But SIMPLICIUS might have considered, as we do, that how ridiculous soever the circumstances might be, the fact, affirmed by so many traditions, might be true, tho he was led to deny it by arguments which ARISTOTLE himself owned to be very problematical. ARISTOTLE, who employed logic very absurdly in physics, might employ it, as absurdly, about history and tradition. Let it be, that the account MOSES gives of the creation, and the cosmogony of SANCHONIATHON, are alike fabulous; yet still the

general fact, advanced by them, may be reputed true. The various fables annexed to it do, in effect, prove it; since it is not likely that they would have been invented, if the foundation of them had not been laid in tradition, if there had not been a stock of truth whereon to graft them.

I AM as much persuaded, as SIMPLICIUS himself, that the Israelites might borrow some egyptian traditions, as it is notorious that they borrowed many civil and religious institutions from the same people. I can believe too, on the faith of learned men, that there is some analogy between the mosaic account of the creation and the phoenician cosmogony. There is nothing extraordinary to alter the state of the question in this. I can believe too, that the six times, in which God made the world, according to an antient tradition of the Persians, are relative to the six days in which he made it, according to the jewish traditions. The Israelites had been slaves to the Egyptians, captives among the Chaldaeans, and subjects to the Persians. They boasted their descent from ABRAHAM; and the magi acknowledged this patriarch for their legislator, and for the institutor of their religion. The reformation, which ZOROASTER made in this, was made after the return of some of the Jews, from Babylon, into their own country. But it was made, according to HIDE and other modern critics, in the reign of DARIUS, son of HYSTASPES, a little before ESDRAS and NEHEMIAS went from the court of Persia to restore the religion, to settle the government, and to compile the traditions of the Jews at Jerusalem. ESDRAS set out from Persia and Babylonia when the disputes between the magians and the sabians ran the highest, and when the new doctrines of ZOROASTER prevailed in the first fervor of reformation. ESDRAS, therefore, and the other Jews, who could not fail to be favorable to the first sect, and averse to the latter, might very

well take, as it is highly probable that they did, the names of the months, the names of angels, many ridiculous anecdotes, and, among the reſt, ſome concerning the creation, from the magians. The tradition was common to all theſe nations, but they invented and they borrowed, from one another, various circumſtances, in which they dreſſed it up differently, each hiſtorian according to his fancy, and conformably to the eſtabliſhed ſyſtem of his religion. This hypotheſis is ſo well founded, and ſo very probable, that our divines do nothing better than weaken the credibility of the fact, when they aſſume, on the ſimilitude of ſome circumſtances, that this tradition, as well as the belief of one God, was preſerved by the Jews alone.

They were both much more antient among the Perſians than Zoroaster or Zerdusht. We have to do here only with the firſt: and as to that, Porphyry cites in his treatiſe, "De antro nympharum," a certain Eubulus, who writ the hiſtory of Mithras, and aſſured in it, that Zoroaster conſecrated a round grotto, ſuch as nature had formed it, adorned with flowers and watered by ſprings, to Mithras, the creator of all things, which grotto was the ſymbol of the world, as the world is the work of Mithras. The ſame reformer inſtituted feſtivals likewiſe to commemorate the beginning of it; and not content with this, he deſcended into particulars; fixed the number of days contained in every one of the ſix times that had been imagined; and marked the gradual progreſs of the creation in each of them.

The Chaldaeans may be coupled, on this occaſion, with the Perſians, as the Phoenicians and the Iſraelites were with the Egyptians. They were all diſtinct nations; they had all their diſtinct religions and traditions; but they all agreed in one,

one, the beginning of the world, how many different fictions ſoever they might relate concerning the time and manner of this beginning. I do not cite the chaldaic oracles. They were as much forged or corrupted, perhaps, as the ſibyline verſes. But we have no need of leaning on their authority. Eusebius has preſerved a remarkable paſſage that was n the hiſtory of Berosus. An antient tradition of the Chaldaeans reported, that our world was formed out of a chaos. All was night and water, till Bel cut this night in two, ſeparated the heavens from the earth, and formed the world. The ſtars, the ſun, the moon, and the planets, were the productions, according to this tradition, of the ſame Bel, by which name the Chaldaeans meaned to ſignify the Kneph of the orthodox Egyptians, their own inviſible Mithras, or, in one word, the ſupreme Being.

I know very well that Diodorus ſays, the Chaldaeans believed the world eternal by it's nature, and incapable of generation or corruption. But, in the firſt place, the authority of Berosus ſeems to deſerve, on this occaſion, much more credit than that of Diodorus, not only becauſe he was much nearer to the times of which he ſpeaks, but becauſe he was a babylonian and a prieſt, and, therefore, better inſtructed, without doubt, than the latter in the traditions of his own country.—In the next place, the difficulty of reconciling theſe two authors, does not ſeem inſuperable. The Greek, in the beginning of his firſt book, ſpeaks of thoſe, who believed the world eternal, and of thoſe, who were of a contrary opinion. But this diſpute ſeems to have riſen among the naturaliſts or the learned, as he calls them, and not among thoſe who contented themſelves to know, about paſt events, what the hiſtory and tradition of their country taught them.——Thus we may underſtand, and ſhould, I think, underſtand what he ſays of

the Chaldaeans; for after having ſaid, that they maintained the eternity of the world, and believed it incapable of generation or corruption, he adds, that they believed the world to be governed by a divine providence, and every thing which happened, to be ordered by the gods, not to happen by chance. Now the greateſt part of what he ſays being manifeſtly an account of philoſophical opinions, and not of facts preſerved in hiſtory or in tradition, it ſeems moſt natural to underſtand the whole in the ſame manner; beſides which, it is to be conſidered, that there might be a tradition of the commencement, and that there could be none of the eternity of the world. From all which, it ſeems evident to me, that the whole of what DIODORUS ſays, is applicable to philoſophical opinions alone, which are ſometimes oppoſed to matters of fact ſufficiently eſtabliſhed; whereas every ſuch hypotheſis ſhould have it's foundation in fact, not to be chimerical. BEROSUS relates what he found in the chaldaic traditions; and DIODORUS tells us, what the opinions were of ſome philoſophers at leaſt. We ſhall ſee preſently, that this oppoſition of a philoſophical hypotheſis to tradition was not confined to Egypt or Chaldaea, and that it does not affect the truth of the propoſition we defend.

STRABO relates, in his fifteenth book, that the brachmans in India agreed with the Greeks in many things, and particularly in this, that "the world had a beginning;" to which he adds, and that "it will be deſtroyed." Advantage may be taken from hence to turn my own way of reaſoning againſt me. It may be ſaid, that, ſince the brachmans believed the future deſtruction of the world, which could not be the ſubject of any tradition, and was not certainly revealed to them by prophecy, the aſſumed commencement of the world might be, and certainly was, merely founded, as well as it's aſſumed deſtruction,

deſtruction, on their philoſophical ſpeculations. It may be ſaid, that we ought to explain this paſſage of STRABO, much as I have explained that of DIODORUS, and to ſuppoſe the whole ſyſtem of theſe indian brachmans philoſophical.

I SHALL have occaſion to conſider, more at length, the true difference between a tradition of opinion, and a tradition of fact. But, in the mean time, I obſerve, that ſince the opinion of the future deſtruction of the world, founded manifeſtly in ſpeculation, was entertained by the Greeks, at the ſame time as the opinion of it's beginning, founded not leſs manifeſtly in tradition; and ſince STRABO aſſures us, that there was a great conformity between the opinions of the Greeks, and the opinions of the Indians, we may well believe that there was the ſame conformity between the principles on which their opinions were framed. Thoſe among the Greeks, who believed the world had a beginning, believed it on the faith of tradition. They who imagined it would have an end, were led to imagine ſo both by phyſical and metaphyſical ſpeculation. Since they were ſure it had a beginning, they concluded, from both, that it would have an end, and grafted opinion on fact. Thus it happened among the Greeks, and thus it might happen among the Indians.

I OBSERVE, in the next place, that if there was any author of equal authority, who aſſerted that the brachmans believed the eternity of the world, to oppoſe to STRABO, as we have BEROSUS, to oppoſe to DIODORUS, this circumſtance might afford ſome pretence to ſay that the brachmans, having framed, from obſervations of the preſent ſtate of the material world, an opinion that it would be ſome time or other deſtroyed by age or accident, were led from thence, by carrying their ſpeculations backwards, to the opinion that it had a beginning: but

but that as there is no ſuch authority to oppoſe to STRABO, we ought to conclude, that the knowledge they had by tradition of the beginning of the world, led them to believe, on phyſical obſervation and metaphyſical reaſoning, it's future deſtruction, rather than to conclude this philoſophical conjecture led them to imagine, without any foundation in tradition, that the world had a beginning. So that I might very well quote the Indians, as an antient nation who concurred in eſtabliſhing the truth of this fact on the faith of their traditions.

I MIGHT go further on to the caſtward, and bring the teſtimony of the Chineſe, on the ſame ſide: a moſt antient nation ſurely, and poſſeſſed of more antient records, perhaps, than any other, tho we have been little acquainted till very lately with their hiſtory, chronology, and traditions. But I chooſe to proceed in quoting authors better known to us, and ſhall therefore cite once more STRABO, whoſe authority, of all the antient writers, is perhaps of the greateſt weight. STRABO repreſents the Aethiopians rather barbarous than civiliſed; and yet this people believed a ſupreme immortal Being, the firſt cauſe of all things. This people therefore believed the beginning of the world, and this people could not fail to have moſt antient traditions, ſince, as rude as they were, the uſe of letters had been known by them from a time immemorial. Enough has been ſaid of the moſt antient nations that are mentioned in hiſtory; and if we deſcend to the Greeks, modern, with reſpect to them, tho antient, with reſpect to us, we ſhall find the ſame tradition eſtabliſhed and further reaſons to perſuade that it was univerſal, allegoriſed, diguiſed, diſputed, and even weakened by time; but ſtill univerſally received, and ſtrongeſt as we remount higheſt in our inquiries after it. Such it was when the Greeks, from whom it has deſcended to us, adopted and tranſmitted it. This tradition ſeems to riſe out of the abyſs

of time with the impetuoſity of a great ſource. But then as the water, which ſpouted out with much noiſe and force in the beginning, runs ſilently and gently on, the further it runs; ſo this tradition grew weaker, but continued to run, when the authors, whom we read at this time, began to write.

The Egyptians were the firſt maſters of the Greeks. Before any of theſe went into Egypt to acquire ſcience, they had received much inſtruction from thence; principles of religion and of civil government and anecdotes of antiquity. Orpheus may paſs for the firſt of theſe egyptian miſſionaries; ſince he came from Egypt, tho he was a thracian. I abandon the verſes, which have gone under his name, as eaſily as the chaldaic oracles; but that I ſhould believe there was no ſuch man, is too much to require. Aristotle aſſerted, as we learn in the firſt book of the nature of the gods, "Orpheum "poetam nunquam fuiſſe." But we find in the ſame treatiſe, that Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod, and Homer, were reckoned among the moſt antient poets. It would not be difficult, perhaps, to diſcover the principle of philoſophical intereſt which induced Aristotle to deny the exiſtence of a man ſo famous in all the traditions of his country, and who had been the ſubject of ſo many fables. What traditions of greater antiquity than Orpheus the Greeks might have, we know not. But he was, certainly, the principal channel, thro which that of the commencement of the world paſſed, from the Egyptians, to Musaeus, Hesiod, and Homer, who received firſt, or were confirmed in the belief of it, by this authority, and who preſerved and propagated it in all their ſongs. Pythagoras took it from the Egyptians likewiſe, and from other eaſtern nations. The whole italic ſchool, and all thoſe of the ionic, who did not prefer their own ſpeculations to a matter of fact, and Plato, the famous founder of the academy, followed them.

None

None of these invented the fact; but all of them dressed it up and delivered it down in different garbs, according to their different systems of philosophy and religion. Even the christians, who came so long afterwards, helped to corrupt this tradition, by interpolating the famous verses, ascribed to Orpheus, which I have for this reason, among others, consented to lay aside; tho still, if we believe these verses were composed by Onomacritus, and not by Orpheus, they were composed at least as early as the age of Pisistratus, and contain, therefore, a very antient tradition.

I might have named, as the preservers of this tradition, among the Greeks, Linus, Thamyras, and others. I might quote several Theogonias, that, it is said, were writ, like that of Aristaeus of the island of Proconnesus, or that of Epimenides of the island of Crete; all which would have been more ridiculous, than they were, if the beginning of the world had not been established in general belief; but I will mention, particularly, that of Hesiod only. He invokes the muses to sing the divine race of those immortal gods born of the earth, of the heavens, and of night, and who have been nourished by the salt sea. He goes on to bid them sing, how the gods and the earth were first made, with the rivers and the immense sea, with the stars and the heavens, with the gods who proceeded from them, and who are the authors of all good things. The same extravagant ideas are to be found in Homer. The ocean was, according to him, the original of all things: and this notion coincides with that of Thales, who taught that all things proceeded from water as their material principle; by which he meaned, no doubt, a certain chaos, wherein all the elements were confounded, till they were reduced into order, that is, till the world began.

THE proofs of the univerſality of this tradition, muffled up almoſt always in allegories and fables are ſo numerous that we run more riſk of being loſt in the multiplicity of them, than of wanting any. ABARIS, the ſcythian, had writ concerning theſe generations of gods. The world was not eternal in the ſyſtem of the druids; and the antient Etrurians had their fables concerning the beginning of it, as well as the Egyptians and the Perſians. The magi, ſays DIOGENES LAERTIUS, taught the generation of the gods: and by theſe gods, they underſtood fire, earth, and water. One of the magi, ſays HERODOTUS, ſung the ſame generation, in an hymn, at all the ſacrifices of the Perſians.

AS poetry perſonified every thing, antient philoſophy, which was little elſe than poetry, animated all the elements; and every part of corporeal nature was filled with inferior divinities: for they acknowledged ſome that were ſuperior, and even a ſupreme Being, who, far from being born of the world, made it, and was the father of gods and men; which puts me in mind of a paſſage in CICERO, where it is ſaid, of this ſupreme Being, "deos alios in terrâ, alios in lunâ, alios in "reliquas mundi partes ſpargens Deus quaſi ferebat."

IT would have been very convenient for all the atheiſtical philoſophers to have aſſumed the eternity of the world; but few of them durſt do ſo, in oppoſition to this univerſality of tradition. They were obliged, therefore, either to reject this tradition, or to find ſome way of accounting for the exiſtence of our planet, without ſuppoſing a ſelf-exiſtent Δημιῦργος, or architect, the firſt mind of ANAXAGORAS. They choſe the laſt, as the moſt eaſy taſk, and EPICURUS ſeemed to think his abſurd ſyſtem more likely to prevail, for this very reaſon,

becauſe it aſſumed that the world had a beginning conformably to tradition. The author of the diſſertation, I have before me, aſſerts, that all the philoſophers, except the epicureans, under which name he comprehends all the atomic philoſophers, held, that the world was eternal. A paſſage in the beginning of the fourth chapter of the treatiſe of CENSORINUS, "De die natali," led him into this error. What he advances may be proved falſe by a deduction of many particulars; but this may be ſaid, with truth, that an opinion of the eternity of the world grew up or ſpread more after ARISTOTLE. Even the latter platonicians took part on this head with the peripatetics. They treated their maſter, as St. JEROM accuſes others, and might have been accuſed himſelf, of treating the ſcriptures. Whatever new opinions philoſophers framed, they dragged in the text of their maſters to ſupport them; which calls to my mind the proceedings of a Jew and of a ſtoical philoſopher. PHILO found a trinity of divine hypoſtaſes in the writings of PLATO. He adopted the opinion, would needs find it in the ſacred writings of his fathers, and reconcile the legiſlator of the Jews with the founder of the academy. Juſt ſo CLEANTHES endeavored to make the fables of ORPHEUS, MUSAEUS, HESIOD, and HOMER agree with what he taught concerning the gods, "Ut veterrimi poetae, qui haec ne "ſuſpicati quidem ſint, ſtoici fuiſſe videantur.*" But after all, nothing can be more ſtrongly aſſerted than the commencement of the world is by PLATO; and even ARISTOTLE himſelf acknowledged, that this philoſopher thought it generated.

IT may ſeem ſtrange, but it is true, that we have a right to quote ARISTOTLE himſelf againſt the eternity of the world. He falls ſeverely on the philoſophical ſyſtems, that prevailed in his time, about the manner in which it began: but he acknowledges the uniformity of this antient tradition. How could

* TULLY de nat. Deor. l. 2.

could he avoid to do ſo? Or how could it be otherwiſe, ſince the Greeks, in his time, had found it eſtabliſhed among all the nations with whom they became acquainted either by commerce or by war? That happened to them, which has happened to us, in much later ages. We have puſhed our diſcoveries thro both hemiſpheres, and have found every where the ſame tradition eſtabliſhed in the belief of mankind. The Chineſe, whom I juſt mentioned above, would paſs, like the Egyptians of old, for the moſt antient race of mankind, and they have traditions and records of immenſe antiquity and very ſingular authenticity. Now theſe traditions and theſe records agree, in one general fact, with all thoſe that have been mentioned, "the world and mankind had a begin-"ning." Even the name of a firſt man is preſerved, and FOHI, who was the ORPHEUS of the eaſt, precedes a very little their hiſtorical age. If we croſs the South-ſea, and viſit the people of Peru or of Mexico, we find the ſame tradition eſtabliſhed by univerſal conſent, as they received it from their fathers. The world began and PACHA CAMAC created it: the ſun, that enlightens the world now, is not eternal; there have been other ſuns before this. If we croſs the continent of America and proceed to the iſlands, we find the inhabitants of them in the ſame belief; at leaſt we might have found them ſo, whilſt they preſerved the primitive ſimplicity of their manners, and the traditions of their forefathers, and till ſpaniſh avarice and ſpaniſh bigotry had exterminated the whole ſpecies.

AFTER ſaying ſo much concerning this tradition, it is neceſſary, I think, to conſider, more particularly, what thoſe principles are, on which reaſon determines us to receive general facts that have no foundation out of tradition, as we receive the moſt authentic hiſtorical truths. I have touched this

ſubject already; but, to treat it with more order and clearneſs, let us deſcend into ſome detail of the eſſential differences between hiſtory and tradition. Let us conſider what thoſe attributes are which the latter wants, and for the want of which this teſtimony cannot produce hiſtorical probability: for if we find that there is not the ſame neceſſity of relation between theſe attributes and the general facts, ſpoken of here, as there is between theſe attributes and every hiſtorical account of paſt events; in ſhort, if we find that ſuch general facts are not in the caſe of thoſe, in order to judge of which the rules of hiſtorical criticiſm have been eſtabliſhed, it will follow, that theſe facts may be received for true, as well as any, and much better than ſeveral of thoſe that are contained in hiſtory, and to the truth of which we aſſent.

A STORY, circumſtantially related, ought not to be received on the faith of tradition; ſince the leaſt reflection on human nature is ſufficient to ſhew, how unſafely a ſyſtem of facts and circumſtances can be truſted for its preſervation to memory alone, and for its conveyance, to oral report alone; how liable it muſt be to all thoſe alterations, which the weakneſs of the human mind muſt cauſe neceſſarily, and which the corruption of the human heart will be ſure to ſuggeſt. An event that is not circumſtantially, is imperfectly related, not only with reſpect to the communication it ſhould give, but with reſpect to the means we ſhould have to judge of it's probability. The means I ſpeak of are thoſe of comparing the different parts of a ſtory together, and of examining how well they coincide and render the whole conſiſtent. In one caſe, then, different circumſtances are to be compared; in the other, all the traditions that can be collected on the ſame ſubject. Inconſiſtent circumſtances deſtroy the credit of the ſtory; repugnant traditions, that of a general event. But the ſilence of ſome hiſto-

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ries or of ſome traditions will deſtroy the credit of neither, when all thoſe who ſpeak of the ſame thing agree. The jewiſh hiſtory has preſerved the memory of a babylonian kingdom, which we call the ſecond empire of the Aſſyrians, unknown to profane hiſtory and tradition, which make mention only of one. That antient monument too of RHAMSES, which GERMANICUS went to ſee in his voyage into Egypt, and the inſcription on it, which contained the names of all the nations whom this prince had conquered in Aſia, makes no mention of the Aſſyrians among thoſe who became tributary to the egyptian empire, as if their very name had not been known a century before the aera of NABONASSAR, tho it mentions the Perſians, the Bactrians, and others, who muſt have been ſuch to the Aſſyrians, if an aſſyrian empire had been eſtabliſhed, as we aſſume, before the aera of NABONASSAR. Notwithſtanding this ſilence, and the vain efforts of ſcholars to reconcile ſacred and profane aſſyriacs, it would be unreaſonable to deny that there was an aſſyrian empire in Aſia. Upon the whole matter, that "the "world had a beginning," is a general fact, even better founded than this, "there has been an aſſyrian monarchy." Some antient traditions, we have ſeen, do not concur with others about the latter. But I preſume it would be hard to cite any body of antient traditions, wherein the commencement of the world is not directly affirmed, or conſtantly ſuppoſed. There is not even the ſilence of tradition againſt it; and as to traditions that deny the fact, there neither have been, nor could be, any.

IT may be thought, and it is true, in general, that hiſtory has this advantage over tradition. The authors of authentic hiſtory are known; but thoſe of tradition, whether authentic or unauthentic, are not known. The probability of facts muſt diminiſh by length of time, and can be eſtimated, at no time,

higher than the value of that original authority, from which it is derived. This advantage, then, authentic hiſtory has, which no tradition can have. The degree of aſſent, which we give to hiſtory, may be ſettled, in proportion to the number, characters, and circumſtances of the original witneſſes; the degrees of aſſent to tradition cannot be ſo ſettled. Let us ſee, therefore, how far this difference may be thought to affect the tradition of the beginning of the world. We ſhall find, I think, that we are very liable to be deceived in all theſe reſpects which ſhould conſtitute the authenticity of hiſtory, and that the difference I have obſerved cannot affect, in any ſort, the true fact I aſſert.

We are deceived, groſsly, very often about the number of witneſſes, two ways. Sometimes by applying teſtimonies that have no true relation to the things teſtified, and ſometimes by taking different repetitions of the ſame teſtimony, for different teſtimonies. Both theſe ways are employed with ſucceſs, artfully by ſome, habitually by others; and numerous citations improperly brought, and careleſsly or ignorantly ſet to account, to increaſe the confuſion and to promote the deception. Nothing can be more ridiculous, perhaps, than to ſee a great part of what we find in profane antiquity applied to confirm what we find in ſacred. Numerous and aſtoniſhing examples of this kind might be brought from all the writers who have endeavoured to eſtabliſh the authenticity of jewiſh, by a ſuppoſed concurrence of profane, traditions. But I paſs theſe over. It is full as ridiculous to ſee all the antient writers, who have ſpoke of the Aſſyrians and Perſians, quoted as ſo many diſtinct witneſſes, when they did, for the moſt part, nothing more than copy Cteſias, firſt, and one another, afterwards. Neither Cteſias, nor Moſes himſelf, may deſerve belief in all the particulars related by them; but Cteſias may be reckoned as a

witneſs the more of ſome general facts, as Moses may be of ſome others.

That the world had a beginning is a naked fact, which neither contains nor implies any thing equivocal. It neither leans on the authority of one nation, nor of one ſyſtem of traditions which many nations may adopt. Nations, the moſt diſtant in place, and the moſt oppoſite in opinions, cuſtoms, and manners, concur in affirming it. All theſe traditions, therefore, have had different originals, or they all proceed from one original tradition. If they had different originals, the truth of the fact is eſtabliſhed by ſo great a number of independent teſtimonies. If they all proceed from one original tradition, the truth of the fact is eſtabliſhed juſt as well; ſince ſuch a tradition muſt have been that of one firſt family or ſociety. As it would be abſurd to aſſume that a tradition, which may be called that of mankind, could be founded originally in any thing elſe than the truth of a fact which concerned all mankind, and of which all mankind had once had a certain aſſurance; ſo it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe that a tradition, ariſing in one family or ſociety alone, could ſpread to all the corners of the earth, and be received alike by nations even unknown to one another, unleſs we ſuppoſe this family or ſociety to be that from which all theſe nations, by whom this tradition was preſerved, proceeded. It does not ſeem that this argument can be eluded.

As there is a great difference between circumſtantial relations and general naked facts, ſo there is, likewiſe, between the tradition I contend for, and every other of the ſame kind. That there has been an univerſal deluge is a fact, as general and as naked as this, "the world had a beginning;" but I apprehend, that the tradition of it is not ſupported like that of the

the commencement of the world. Has the memory of this event been preſerved among all the antient nations? There are men bold enough to ſay ſo; but the contrary is true. The tradition of NOAH's deluge is vouched by no other authority than that of MOSES: for thoſe nations, which preſerved the memory of ſo many particular deluges, knew nothing of this univerſal deluge; and yet it is impoſſible to conceive that the memory of ſuch a cataſtrophe ſhould have been known only by one people, and that not the moſt antient neither; or being known to all, ſhould have been preſerved only in one corner of the earth. If this tradition then is liable to ſuſpicion, for want of a ſufficient number of teſtimonies, that of the commencement of the world is liable to no ſuſpicion; becauſe it has as many teſtimonies as can be expected on the ſuppoſition of it's truth. Let us proceed now to conſider the veracity and probity of witneſſes, and the difference between hiſtory and tradition on this head. Hiſtory to be authentic muſt give us not only the means of knowing the number, but of knowing the characters, of the witneſſes who vouch for it. Tradition in general gives us the means of knowing neither; and the particular tradition we ſpeak of here, which is that of nations, not of men, does not ſtand in need of the latter.

THIS condition of hiſtorical probability is even more important than the number of witneſſes; and it is by this that we are moſt liable to be deceived. There are certain follies which prevail ſometimes like epidemical maladies, and infect whole nations with their delirium. Such there were, of one ſort, among the Egyptians; ſuch there were, of another ſort, among the Jews; and the predeſtination to univerſal empire may paſs for another, among the Romans. But whatever various effects different deliriums may produce in different countries, there is one which they produce alike in all, the ſpirit of inventing

venting, believing, and propagating lies. Theſe lies come ſoon to have education and authority on their ſide. It becomes the intereſt of particular men, or of particular ſocieties, to profit of the public credulity, and when they have once done ſo, their lies produce ſuch effects, under the management of bold and artful men, as ſober truth never could. Thus Mahomet, to go no higher, inſtituted a new religion in the ſeventh century of ours, and founded a great empire. Mahomet had intrepidity as well as addreſs, and if a miſerable Jew of Aſia minor, ſeventy or eighty years ago, had not wanted the former, we might have ſeen, very poſſibly, at this hour, a new ſpiritual and temporal empire eſtabliſhed by the adorers of a new Meſſiah. But the courage of Sabatai Sevi, to whom the Jews reſorted from all parts, in a firm perſuaſion that he was their true Meſſiah, failed him, and he paſſes for an impoſtor, merely becauſe he durſt not ſtand an impalement. Thus not only lies, but whole ſyſtems of lies, get into hiſtory; paſs for religious truths; and ſerve to ſupport, by appeals to them in after-times, the original fraud. Mahomet was obliged to fly from Mecca to Medina by the unbelieving Arabs. But the Arabs now, and all thoſe who have been converted to mahometiſm, (for it would be falſe to ſay, tho we hear it continually ſaid, that this religion has been propagated by force alone and not by perſuaſion) go very devoutly in pilgrimage to the place from which he was driven, and the time of his flight is become their ſacred aera.

I dwell the longer on this point, becauſe it is that which juſtifies hiſtorical pyrrhoniſm the moſt. The antient manner of recording events, made it eaſy to practice all theſe frauds. The prieſts in Egypt, in Judaea, and elſewhere, were intruſted to make and to keep theſe records; and they were under a double obligation, if I may ſay ſo, for ſuch they thought it no

doubt, to keep them with greater regard to the ſyſtem of religion, whoſe miniſters they were, than to the truth of things. They were to keep up the credit of antient lies, and to invent as many new ones, as were neceſſary to propagate the ſame fraud. By theſe means, and on theſe motives, the whole of hiſtory was corrupted in thoſe nations, as we ſhall eaſily believe that it could not fail to be, when we conſider the connexity between civil and eccleſiaſtical affairs, and their mutual influence on one another. JOSEPHUS, writing againſt APPION, praiſes this manner of preſerving the memory of things, in order to beſpeak approbation to the practice, which was that of his own country. He boaſts much of the ſincerity, and even of the inſpiration, if I miſtake not, of the jewiſh ſcribes. But good ſenſe, founded in experience, will anſwer that they who record matters, concerning which they are ſtrongly biaſſed by their affections, their paſſions, and their prejudices, and wherein they have, directly, or indirectly, an immediate and great private intereſt to ſerve by inventing falſhoods, or by diſguiſing truth, are never to be received as good witneſſes, unleſs their teſtimony be confirmed by collateral and diſintereſted evidence. That they are not to be received as ſuch, on any other terms, we need go no further than the Jews themſelves for examples. Some of their heroes and heroines may be thought juſtly, when we conſider the anachroniſms and the blunders they commit, as fictitious as AMADIS of Gaul, and their traditions no more authentic than thoſe of archbiſhop TURPIN.

THE uncertainty of hiſtory ariſes principally from the cauſes here laid down. We are leſs liable to be deceived by the concurrence of authors, more independent and more indifferent than theſe, tho they may not be all of equal credit: becauſe when their motives and deſigns are not the ſame, when

they had no common principle, and when they cannot be ſuſpected to have had any concert together, nothing but the notoriety of facts can make their relations coincide. In ſuch caſes a nice examination of the veracity and probity of hiſtorians, when we can make it, is as little neceſſary as it is in matters of tradition, where we cannot make it. We may ſubſcribe, at leaſt as reaſonably, to the united teſtimony of a great number of traditions, whoſe authors are unknown to us, as we may to facts reported by a great number of hiſtorians, tho the authority of ſome of theſe would be otherwiſe very precarious.

Experience ſhews ſufficiently, that there is no falſhood too groſs to be impoſed on any people civiliſed or barbarous, learned or ignorant, but we ſhall never conceive that the ſame lie could be impoſed on all people: becauſe it is impoſſible that the ſame lie ſhould flatter them all alike, or be equally well proportioned to the intereſt and deſigns of a prevalent ſociety in every nation. What immediate or neceſſary relation has the beginning of the world to the predominant folly of the Egyptians, for inſtance, or the Chineſe, or to the intereſt of the prieſts, among the former, and any of the ſeveral ſects, among the latter? Since they believed the world to have had a beginning; it was very conformable to the folly of theſe two people to inſiſt that they deſcended from the firſt men, and were the moſt antient nations of the world; but what need had they to aſſume the commencement of it? Would they not have flattered their vanity more to ſay, that it was eternal, and that their race was coeternal with it? ——Once more. What neceſſary relation had the beginning of the world to the favorite principle of the Jews, who believed themſelves a people choſen by God, out of all the people of the earth? Could the eternity of the world make it leſs likely that they

deſcended from SEM, or the vocation of ABRAHAM more improbable, or deſtroy the credibility of any fact that flattered their vanity? I confeſs, I think not. If it be ſaid, that this nation had nobler ideas of the ſupreme Being than any other; and that it was more conformable to theſe ideas to believe that the world was made by God, than that it is eternal as well as he; I might deny the firſt propoſition, and ſhew that no nation had ſuch mean ideas of the Divinity in many reſpects as this. But if I admitted it, for argument ſake, I might aſk how this philoſophical opinion could be paſſed for a matter of fact on the Egyptians, who boaſted ſo much of their own antiquity, by a people, who had grown up among them, and who had been ſo long their ſlaves? If this tradition of the beginning of the world had prevailed among the Jews firſt, who were known to few people, and deſpiſed by thoſe that knew them, how came it to ſpread far and wide to the utmoſt extremities of the eaſt and weſt?—Since I have named the weſt, let me mention the Peruvians, and aſk how the beginning of the world can be ſaid to have flattered the general folly of this people, or the particular intereſt of their incas? They thought their incas the children of the ſun. To what purpoſe was it to make them believe that PACHA CAMAC was a being ſuperior to the ſun, and that he created the world? Would it not have been more agreeable to the prejudices of the Peruvians, and to the intereſts of the incas, to have ſuppoſed the world eternal, and themſelves the offſpring of an eternal father?

LIES, that are produced by the predominant paſſions of people, and by the policy of thoſe who lead them, carry for the moſt part on their fronts, if I may ſay ſo, the marks of their original: and this obſervation will hold in a multitude of inſtances that may be brought from hiſtory and tradition, both from facts circumſtantially related, and from thoſe that are naked

naked, or almoſt naked of circumſtances. But the tradition that affirms the beginning of the world is not in this caſe. It is relative no more to the particular character of one people than of another. It favors no more one general principle of religion or policy than another. In a word, force your imagination as much as you pleaſe, you will find inſurmountable difficulties in your way, if you ſuppoſe the fact invented: but all theſe difficulties vaniſh when you ſuppoſe it true. The univerſal conſent of mankind follows naturally and neceſſarily the truth of the fact. The antiquity of the tradition is a conſequence of the antiquity of the world, and the great variety of fables, which have been invented about it, is a circumſtance that accompanies every event that has deſcended long in oral tradition, and that has not been aſcertained by cotemporary hiſtory, nay, even ſome that ſeem to have been ſo aſcertained.

There remains, to be ſpoken of, another condition of hiſtorical probability, which it may be ſuppoſed that tradition cannot have, and which we have ſeen, in the caſe of numbers, and veracity or probity of witneſſes, that hiſtory itſelf does not always furniſh, and for want of which we are often impoſed upon by it. This condition is ſo eſſential, that neither the numbers nor characters of witneſſes will conſtitute probability without it. The condition I mean is this: that the original authors were not only cotemporary but competent witneſſes. The examination whether they were ſuch or no may be reckoned for another advantage, which hiſtory has, or muſt have, to be deemed authentic, over tradition, by what paſſes every day, under our eyes, when we ſee almoſt every public fact related, and even tranſmitted to poſterity, not according to truth, but according to the wrong judgments which are made by prejudice or by paſſion. What happens now, happened formerly, and no ſtronger proof of it can be required than that which we find in Arrian. He had

had before him the memorials of ARISTOBULUS and of PTOLEMY, two principal captains that accompanied ALEXANDER in all his expeditions; and yet the hiſtorian was puzzled, ſometimes, by the inconſiſtency of their relations.

ON this head, the competency of original witneſſes, it may be ſaid, that if hiſtory wants it ſometimes, tradition muſt want it always, and that tradition, eſpecially, which I defend. I may be told, and I was told, that if every thing elſe, which I have advanced, was admitted, the objection, ariſing from the incompetency of witneſſes, would be ſufficient to refute me. It was urged, that whoever were the firſt to ſay there had been a monarchy of the Aſſyrians, might know the truth of what they ſaid, but that they, who were the firſt to affirm the beginning of the world, could not know the truth of what they ſaid, not even on the ſuppoſition that they were the firſt of men. This tradition, therefore, is that of an opinion, not of fact. The exiſtence of God is a tradition too; and theiſts, very often, appeal to the univerſality of this tradition to prove the truth of an opinion, juſt as you appeal to the ſame univerſality to prove a fact. Had you proved the fact, you might have drawn from it all the arguments that can be drawn to eſtabliſh, in belief, the exiſtence of a ſupreme Being. But you have amuſed yourſelf with nothing better than proving, the truth of one opinion, by the tradition of another, which is a proceeding that cannot be juſtified; becauſe we are as able, and probably more able judges of the opinion, than any of the antient nations could be witneſſes of the fact. As different nations have their different follies, there are ſome common to all mankind. As there are fictions which favor the intereſts and promote the deſigns of thoſe who govern in all the countries of the world, the exiſtence of one ſupreme Being has been acknowledged in all ages, and if you pleaſe

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to ſay ſo, by all people. Superſtition took hold, and policy profited of this opinion, under one form or other. Superſtition abounds wherever there are men, and ſome kind of policy wherever there are ſocieties. Metaphyſical reaſonings on the nature and attributes of a ſupreme Being, may perſuade philoſophers that this Being, whom they aſſume to exiſt by the neceſſity of his nature, created the world, which does not ſeem ſo to exiſt. Naturaliſts, in particular, may have adopted eaſily an opinion which ſaves them much pains and uſeleſs reſearch. A firſt cauſe of infinite wiſdom and power, cuts all the gordian knots that embarraſs them, and a ſingle ſuppoſition furniſhes the ſolution of a thouſand difficulties.——All this was urged with much vehemence, by Damon, and he concluded, by putting this dilemma. If the opinion of the commencement of the world is conformable to the knowledge we have of things, and proportioned to the human underſtanding, as you aſſert, there reſults from thence no proof that the fact is true, but great reaſon to believe that men might aſſume it, without knowing any thing of the matter. On the other ſide, if this be not true, your univerſal tradition wants the firſt and principal foundation of probability which you have laid down.

I have put theſe objections, ſuch as were made, and ſuch as might have been made to me, in their full force. They ſeem plauſible; let us ſee if they are unanſwerable. They will not appear ſo, if I can ſhew firſt, that the atheiſt begs the queſtion when he aſſumes that, ſuppoſing the world to have had a beginning, even the firſt of men could not be competent witneſſes, becauſe they could not be competent judges, of the truth of the fact; ſecondly, if I can ſtate ſo clearly, the diſtinction to be made between the tradition of an opinion, and the tradition of a fact, in our judgments about them, as to reduce to an abſurdity the ſuppoſition, that the

the tradition we ſpeak of, is of the firſt ſort; and thirdly, if I can prove, by reaſons drawn from the human nature and from general experience, that unleſs the world had really had a beginning, the opinion of it's eternity would have been the opinion of all antiquity, and the commencement of it would not have been eſtabliſhed in tradition.

The atheiſt begs the queſtion, and by begging it he advances a fooliſh and arrogant propoſition: ſince to be ſure that the firſt men could not be witneſſes of the beginning of the world, he muſt aſſume that he knows, very exactly, how the world we inhabit was framed, if it was framed at all. Such inconveniencies happen frequently to thoſe who combat truth. They call temerity to their aid; and they affirm, boldly, on precarious conjectures; and when they have heated their own imagination, they hope, and not always in vain, to ſeduce thoſe of other men. In the defence of the truth, we ſhall never be reduced to any ſuch extremity. Tho the atheiſt muſt pretend to know how the material world was made, and in what manner the human race began, in order to deny that the firſt men were competent judges and witneſſes of both. We pretend to no ſuch knowledge: but nothing leſs than ſuch knowledge can juſtify his denial; whereas the univerſality of the tradition juſtifies abundantly our affirmation. We may affirm, on the faith of all mankind, that the world began, much better than it can be affirmed, on the faith of a few precarious partial and inconſiſtent traditions, that there was an empire of the Aſſyrians.

To build a world is not ſo eaſy a thing as many a ſpeculative architect has imagined. The author of the book of Geneſis begins his hiſtory by it; and tho we do not ſet to his account the uſe which has been made of paſſages in his nar-

ration, yet is it impoſſible to excuſe all the puerile, romantic, and abſurd circumſtances, which nothing could produce but the habit of dealing in trifling traditions, and a moſt profound ignorance. It is impoſſible to read, what he writ on this ſubject, without feeling contempt for him, as a philoſopher, and horror as a divine; for he is to be conſidered under both theſe characters.

NATURAL philoſophy made little progreſs among the Greeks and the Romans, and a ſyſtem of the univerſe was very little known by them. The eaſtern nations knew it better; but among theſe we muſt not reckon that of the Jews. It has been ſaid, that PYTHAGORAS was a diſciple of the prophet EZEKIEL, or had ſome other jewiſh maſters. If this idle conjecture were true in fact, it would not be true, however, that he took from them his mundane ſyſtem. PHILOLAUS, who publiſhed his doctrines, had very different notions of it from thoſe of the Jews, and from thoſe of the other Greeks. One would think too, that ſome modern aſtronomer had dictated the hypotheſis which PLUTARCH and DIOGENES LAERTIUS attribute to CLEANTHES, the ſamian. This true ſyſtem, which accords ſo little with that of MOSES, after having been long loſt, was renewed in the ſixteenth century by COPERNICUS, confirmed and improved by GALILEI and KEPLER, and ſince demonſtrated by NEWTON. How magnificent a ſcene of the univerſe have theſe new diſcoveries opened! how much more worthy of the wiſdom, the power, and the immenſity of God, than all the paultry confined ſyſtems of antient philoſophers, and of MOSES among the reſt!

THO we know much more than they did of the works of God, yet we know as little as they did concerning the production of them. Antiquity had other makers of worlds be-

ſides Moses. Plato was one of thoſe; and if his hypotheſis be no more probable than that of the jewiſh legiſlator, it is, at leaſt, a little more reverential to the ſupreme Being. The ſame preſumptuous confidence has been ſeen in theſe ages, wherein philoſophers, having greater knowledge, ſhould have had more modeſty, and have been more ſenſible how ignorant we remain, after all the improvements we are capable of making. Des Cartes, for inſtance, who had much of this preſumption, and employed a great deal of artifice to make his hypotheſes paſs for real diſcoveries, acknowledged a little more need of a God than Strato avowed. He wanted a God to create matter and to impreſs motion on it. But when he had aſſumed thus much, he thought himſelf able to proceed without this help, and to ſhew, how the world was formed, or how an univerſe might be formed, by the laws of matter and motion. I told Damon, that I thought this philoſopher's ill ſucceſs would hinder him from any enterpriſe of the ſame kind; that I ſhould, therefore, have ſtill a right to conclude, that he begged the queſtion, when he aſſerted that it implied contradiction to ſuppoſe the firſt men capable of knowing that the world began; and I deſired him further to conſider with me, whether laying this preſumption aſide, we may not aſſume, without any, that there might have been certain marks, by which the firſt men muſt neceſſarily know that they were the firſt men, and that the ſyſtem of the world began. If we find ſuch marks, and find them probable, by their analogy to what we know, it will follow, I think, that the beginning of the world has ſome proof "à poſteriori;" whereas the eternity of it can have none of this kind, any more than "à priori."

However this planet of ours was formed, the firſt men could not poſſibly be ſpectators of the formation of it. Both men and all other animals required an earth to walk on, food to

to nouriſh them, and an atmoſphere to breathe in, and the light of the ſun to conduct them. The prior exiſtence of the ſun might be neceſſary too, on another account, antecedently to their creation. This great luminary might be neceſſary to the formation, as we know that it is to the preſervation, of our planet, whether that of the moon were ſo or not, and whether the Arcadians were in the right or not, when they ſaid, that they were older than this ſecondary planet.

But now, tho there could be no human witneſſes of the world ariſing out of a chaos, and growing into that form and order wherein we ſee it, yet the firſt men might know, very certainly, that this ſyſtem of things began to exiſt. As it would be ridiculous to aſſert, like the thuſcan author, whom Suidas mentions but does not name, that God employed twelve thouſand years in creating the univerſe; ſo is there no neceſſity of believing that the ſolar ſyſtem, or even this one planet was the work of ſix days. Such precipitation ſeems not leſs repugnant to that general order of nature, which God eſtabliſhed and which he obſerves in her productions, than the day of reſt, which Moses ſuppoſes God to have taken, or which the Jews invented to make one of their inſtitutions more reſpectable, is repugnant to all the ideas we are able to frame of the Divinity. Tho it be conformable to our notions of wiſdom, that every thing neceſſary to man was created, when he began to exiſt; yet is there nothing which obliges us to believe, that mankind began to exiſt in all the parts of the world at once.

We need put our imagination to no great efforts, to believe that all this might be: and if it might be, we may ſuppoſe that it was. We do not, like reaſoners "à priori," imagine what may have been according to our abſtract reaſonings, and ſo conclude from poſſibility to actuality. We proceed much more

reaſonably from actuality to poſſibility, in a method ſo often, and ſo abſurdly reverſed by philoſophers. A more able naturaliſt would ſucceed better in finding thoſe marks by which the firſt men might know the commencement of this ſyſtem. I will mention three or four, which are obvious enough, and may ſerve to explain a matter that ſeemed paradoxical and is not, perhaps, abſolutely eſſential to my argument.

The general opinion of all thoſe who have reaſoned about the creation or formation of the world, and that which Moses himſelf follows, aſſumes that there was originally a chaos or confuſed maſs of matter wherein all the elements or firſt principles of things, which exiſt in the material ſyſtem, were contained. Whether this maſs was created or no, they thought it ſo neceſſary to be ſuppoſed, that they could not go on one ſtep, in building a world, without it. As ſoon as it is ſuppoſed, "inſtant ardentes Tyrii," they all go to work. Every one ſeparates and diſpoſes theſe materials in his own way; the laws of mechaniſm are employed, according to the different plans of theſe architects, and a world is ſoon made.—In one of theſe philoſophical romances, publiſhed at the end of the laſt century, the ingenious author aſſumes that our planet was, till the deluge, in a direct ſituation to the ſun; that is to ſay, that it's axis was parallel to the axis of the ecliptic, or, in other words, that the ecliptic was confounded with the equator. Among ſeveral advantages which he pretends to draw from this hypotheſis, the great facility of peopling the world with inhabitants is one. He thinks that animals could not have been brought forth, nor have grown up, if there had been any variety in the ſeaſons by the obliquity of the ecliptic, and if theſe children of the earth, hatched, as we may ſay, by the ſun, had been expoſed, at firſt, to the injuries of the air, and to the cold of a winter.—Had this author been oppoſed by his own tribe

tribe alone, and in a theological way, he might have eſcaped pretty well; but the natural philoſophers and the mathematicians roſe up againſt him, and battered down his hypotheſis. I enter not into particulars. The concluſion drawn from all their arguments was this, that the preſent ſituation being more advantageous to the earth, in general, than any other, we ought to be perſuaded that it is now the ſame wherein God placed it originally. But I doubt very much whether this concluſion be undeniable. The ſupreme Being proportions always his means to his ends, and may therefore employ different means when different ends are to be attained. Let it be that the preſent obliquity of the ecliptic, which is of twenty-three degrees and twenty-nine minutes, may be in the preſent ſtate of the world the moſt advantageous. Nothing hinders us from aſſuming, that another obliquity, or no obliquity at all, might be more advantageous when the preſent ſyſtem of things began. If that of the chevalier de Louville be true, this obliquity was of about forty-five degrees one hundred and thirty thouſand years ago. On the compariſon of which two obliquities, I ſhall leave philoſophers and mathematicians to diſpute as long as they pleaſe.

What it is to my purpoſe to obſerve is, that no proof will ariſe, from all they can ſay, to convince us that the preſent was the original ſituation of the world to the ſun. Infinite wiſdom does not change the means, as divines would ſometimes make us believe that he does, at leaſt, in the oeconomy of the moral ſyſtem, when the ends are the ſame. Nay, the ſame means ſerve often to accompliſh different ends. But when the ends are ſo different, that the means of accompliſhing one imply contradiction with the means of accompliſhing another, we may ſay, very aſſuredly, that infinite wiſdom changes the means; and, therefore, if the means of preſerving the material

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and animal world are different from thoſe which were neceſſary to the beginning of both, the preſent poſition of the earth may very well be thought not to have been the firſt. If alternate corruptions and generations are become neceſſary, and if the former produce the latter, it could not be ſo from the firſt. The firſt was certainly very different from thoſe which we obſerve. Corruption could not then be neceſſary to generation. If a greater degree of heat was ſo for ſome productions, that greater degree is to be found in BURNET's hypotheſis. If leſs, and very different degrees were neceſſary, theſe different degrees are to be found in the ſame hypotheſis gradually leſſening from the equator, and this gradation, by which different climates are formed, might be neceſſary for different productions to a certain diſtance from that climate where the ſun was always in the zenith. As there were no variations in theſe different climates, but each enjoyed a particular and uniform ſeaſon, the animals and plants, of each, were nouriſhed and carried to the perfection of their growth, by the ſame principle by which they had been produced, and in a manner ſuitable to their nature, and to that of their climate.

WHILST it fared thus with one part of the world, the other parts were in a very different ſtate according to this hypotheſis. But far from finding any thing here, that may ſeem repugnant to the wiſdom of the architect, this wiſdom ſeems more fully diſplayed than in the hypotheſis of MOSES or of PLATO, and this order to have much more analogy with the order of nature which we ſee eſtabliſhed. Theſe different climates appear like ſo many different matrices or wombs, impregnated with the original ſeeds of things, and wherein the firſt productions were formed by the inconceivable energy of divine power. In other climates, more diſtant from the equator, where the influence of the ſun, the firſt of ſecond cauſes employed in theſe generations, was gradually

dually leſs felt, the great work of the creation might advance more ſlowly. In climates ſtill more diſtant, this influence might become too weak to produce any conſiderable effects, and the great work might proceed ſtill more ſlowly, or not at all. Then, perhaps, the obliquity of the ecliptic might begin, by ſlow degrees, without cauſing any diſorder in the climates already inhabited. The firſt ſituation of the world to the ſun having had it's effect, another ſituation might become neceſſary for two purpoſes, to render thoſe climates, where the ſun was always in the zenith, more temperate; to carry the generations of animals and of the fruits of the earth forward on both ſides to the north and to the ſouth; to give a greater degree of heat, where a greater was ſtill wanted, and to give ſome, where there was none at all.

We may believe, that this obliquity of the ecliptic aroſe much faſter than the chevalier De Louville aſſumed it to decreaſe. A minute in one hundred years is too little. Let us ſuppoſe, on the prerogative of hypotheſes, a degree, and even more, if you think fit. In this manner, thoſe parts of the world, which were exceſſively heated, cooled, and thoſe which were frozen by cold, heated gradually. Thus a ſyſtem of final cauſes became, it may be, complete, and the earth having paſſed thro the poſitions which were, of all poſſible poſitions, the moſt proper to create, might ſtop at that which is ſaid to be, of all others, the moſt proper to preſerve.

If the learned maſter of the charter-houſe, and the able ſcotch mathematician, who writ againſt him, were ſtill alive, I ſhould expect that they would think themſelves under ſome obligation to me for having endeavoured to compromiſe matters between them, and to unite, in one ſcheme, their contrary opinions. But ſince I cannot have this advantage, I

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muſt content myſelf with the inward ſatisfaction I feel, in contemplating this plauſible notion, which I have advanced on grounds as good as many of thoſe, that are not deemed paradoxical either by divines or philoſophers, have been eſtabliſhed. They are poſſible, no doubt; and, I preſume, they will never be demonſtrated falſe, nor any other ways of accounting for the ſame things, true. It is not however quite neceſſary to my purpoſe; for whatever circle our planet deſcribed, when her courſe round the ſun began, we muſt be perſuaded that the ſurface of it was warmed and cheriſhed enough by the rays of the central ſun to promote generation and vegetation, for which it was already prepared.—If the preſent obliquity of the ecliptic prevailed then, the torrid, the temperate, and the frozen zones, as we call them, might be capable of the various productions proper to them; or we may aſſume, very conſiſtently, that countries more diſtant received, from thoſe that were nearer the ſun, ſuch animals and ſuch plants as their climates were fit to preſerve, tho not fit to generate.—In ſhort, we need not apprehend the want of heat, even on the received hypotheſis. The ſun, much older probably than our world, and who has, certainly, grown older ever ſince, may have loſt much of the force and efficacy which he had in thoſe primaeval days. Nay more; aſtronomers and natural philoſophers agree, I think, about that perpetual expence, which all the ſuns of the univerſe are at, to enlighten, to warm, and nouriſh their ſeveral ſyſtems; of which expence, we muſt believe, that our ſun has his ſhare. They aſſume indeed, that the atmoſpheres of theſe ſuns compreſs ſo ſtrongly the exhalations that riſe from them, and drive them back with ſo much force and ſo much oeconomy, not ſuffering any more than are abſolutely neceſſary to paſs, that theſe ſprings of light and heat cannot be exhauſted, nor ſuffer any great diminution in thouſands of years. But thouſands of years, and God alone knows how

many, are elapſed ſince our ſun was firſt lighted up, and he may have therefore ſuffered ſome diminution.

These hypothetical reaſonings, and others to the ſame purpoſe, may be, I think, maintained, whether we ſuppoſe this obliquity of the ecliptic to have been decreaſing or increaſing: for the decreaſe of ſome minutes in a century, during a ſpace of time, even as long as that which the Egyptians imagined, will not be found inconſiſtent with our hypotheſis. Our hypotheſis wants to aſſume little more than this, that nature, who acts with much ſimplicity and uniformity, acted much in the ſame manner after her firſt productions, in thoſe of animals for inſtance; and if this be granted, it will follow, evidently, that the firſt men were competent witneſſes of the firſt propagations of the animal kind; which would be of itſelf a ſufficient proof that they were ſuch of the beginning of the world.

Nature has every where fixed certain ſeaſons, at which all, or the greateſt part of them, propagate their ſeveral ſpecies, whilſt man enjoys the noble prerogative of doing the ſame all the year round, "Homini maximè coitus temporibus omnibus "opportunus eſt." It is Aristotle who ſays this. But then this prerogative extends no further: and a term is fixed to man, as it is to the ſpecies of all other animals for the bearing their fruit. The philoſopher, I have cited, deſcends into a particular account of theſe different terms, in the fifth book of his hiſtory of animals, and as we know that men are nine months in their mothers bellies, he aſſures us that the camel is twelve. Theſe animals, then, and all thoſe who require a longer term than that of nine months, appeared later even than the ſecond generation of human creatures, in the ordinary manner that it has been carried on from the firſt genera-

tion downwards. Men were by conſequence witneſſes of the firſt propagations of animals. The ſame propoſition will hold, if we ſuppoſe them generated faſter and ſooner in the courſe of theſe generations, or even primaevally; for, if man, for example, was but three days, or three hours, in forming out of the earth, and in receiving the breath of life, it will follow, by a very fair analogy, that the ſame operations took up four days or four hours for the formation of a camel, and eight for that of an elephant.

I MIGHT expect to hear, upon this occaſion, many common-place notions advanced, to ſhew more time required, in the proceſs of nature, to form this animal after the image of God, than all the others, ſo vaſtly inferior to him in figure and compoſition. But theſe perſons ought to reflect, that how diſtant ſoever animal may be from animal, relatively to our notion of perfection and imperfection, there can be no difference in the diſtance between any of them and God, who ordered this proceſs of nature for reaſons that we do not know, but certainly without regard to that dignity of nature which we imagine. The creation of a man or of an angel, in the works of God, is not more conſiderable than the creation of the meaneſt inſect, nor requires that the divine energy ſhould be exerted in a longer and more operoſe proceſs of nature.

BUT if it is probable that the firſt men might ſee the commencement of thoſe ſpecies of animals, whoſe formation require longer time than their own, it is not impoſſible, neither, that they might ſee the commencement of thoſe ſpecies, whoſe formation required a leſs time. We may very eaſily imagine, that the creation had two ſorts of progreſſion, as the world has two ſorts of motion. Nature might follow ſuch an order, as we have mentioned, in every climate; but ſhe might follow

follow a certain general order likewiſe, in all climates alike. As more time was neceſſary for the production of one animal than another, in the ſame climate, ſo more time might be neceſſary to bring the ſame animal up to the perfection of his nature in one climate than in another. As the hare might begin to run and the ſheep to feed before either man, or camel, or elephant was ſufficiently formed to anſwer the ends of it's creation; ſo the creation, in general, might be far advanced, or even completed, in ſome climates, before it was ſo in others. The ſeeds, or firſt principles of animal life, might have more or leſs force and vigor, according to the different influences of the ſun, tho they were ſcattered every where alike. The firſt men, therefore, who might ſee no more than the laſt acts, if I may ſay ſo, of this great drama in the countries where they themſelves aroſe, might ſee the very firſt acts, wherein animals were brought on the ſtage, in other countries. They might be ſpectators at twice, and in a reverſed order, of the whole piece.

Creation finiſhed, propagation began, and the ſame inſtinct urged the two ſexes to the ſame act. Inſtinct urged them to it firſt; a ſenſe of pleaſure recalled them to it afterwards; and the multiplication of their ſpecies was not a motive, probably, to theſe conjunctions. The revolution of ſome months ſhewed them the conſequences of it; and the revolution of ſome years ſhewed them, that they and their offspring were born to die. Let us put ourſelves, for a moment, in the place of the firſt men. Could they doubt that they were ſuch? Could they doubt that all the other animals they ſaw, were the firſt of their kinds likewiſe? Could they fail to tranſmit to their poſterity this tradition, "the world had a be-
"ginning?" He who has a great mind to cavil, may ſay, that they did not know, by theſe marks, that the material

world began, they only knew, that the animal inhabitants of it began then to exiſt. But if the firſt men could not be witneſſes of their own creation, they might be ſuch of the creation of other animals, as much as of the propagation of their own, and of every other ſpecies: ſo that, if they knew certainly, that the animal world began, I do not ſee what the atheiſt will gain by aſſuming that they were ignorant of the beginning of the material world. A God was neceſſary for one as much as for the other, and if tradition affirmed nothing more than the firſt, it would ſerve equally well to refute the atheiſt, who denies the exiſtence of any ſuch Being. Was it neceſſary to diſcover this great truth that they ſhould reaſon logically, and tranſmit to poſterity an opinion only? But in all caſes they might know, by other marks ſufficient to awaken the attention of a Samojede, or to inform an Hottentot, that the whole ſyſtem then began. The lives of theſe men were, probably, much longer than ours; and if you compare what they muſt have ſeen in their youth, with what they muſt have obſerved in their old age, you will find that the experience of their whole lives, was one continued proof to them, that they lived in the firſt age of the material world. Obſerve it in one inſtance. The earth, out of which they had been created, furniſhed what was neceſſary for their ſubſiſtence.

" per ſe dabat omnia tellus;
" Contentique cibis nullo cogente creatis,
" Arbuteos foetus, montanaque fraga, legebant, &c."

Theſe were the ſpontaneous gifts of nature, and men had no ſhare, at firſt, in the production or improvement of them. They learned, in time, to do both, to ſow corn, and to make bread. Trees grew up, and as they grew, they furniſhed a better

better retreat to birds, and a better ſhade to men. An old oak became at length, to them, a new phaenomenon.

If it was not time to finiſh this article, I might eaſily ſhew, in a multitude of other inſtances, that the firſt men muſt neceſſarily know that they were cotemporaries with the material world, and ſaw the beginning of a new order of things. But after wandering, in complaiſance to the atheiſt, in the ſpaces of imagination, and to ſhew him that, altho neither the firſt nor the laſt of men were able to diſcover how the world was made, yet the firſt might know by ſufficient experience, and the laſt by ſufficient teſtimony, that it had a beginning, let us return into the cloſer precincts of reaſon and finiſh this article, as Mr. Huygens finiſhes his conjectures about the planetary world. After ſpeaking of the abſurdities contained in the phyſics of Des Cartes, he adds, " mihi magnum quid con-
" ſecuti videbimur ſi, quemadmodum ſeſe habeant res quae
" in naturâ exiſtunt, intellexerimus, à quo longiſſimè etiam
" nunc abſumus. Quomodo autem quaeque effectae fuerint,
" quodque ſint eſſe coeperint, id nequaquam humano ingenio
" excogitari, aut conjecturis attingi, poſſe," this philoſopher aſſerts with great reaſon. Experimental philoſophy has made great progreſs already, in diſcovering to us the things and the order of nature. Where it continues to be cultivated it will continue, doubtleſs, to diſcover more, and after all, human knowledge will ſtop far ſhort of human curioſity; for this goes beyond our means of knowledge, nay, even beyond the boldeſt conjectures we can make.

But now, having ſhewn the atheiſt, " ex abundantiâ," how the firſt men might have certainty of knowledge concerning the beginning of the world, and were, therefore, authentic witneſſes of the truth of this fact and authentic authors of the

the tradition, it is time to ſhew that, without entering into ſuch conſiderations, we muſt allow this tradition to be a tradition of fact, and not of opinion. This is the ſecond of thoſe articles that we propoſed to examine in anſwer to the atheiſt's objections.—There muſt be ſome certain principles and ſome certain rule to diſtinguiſh between theſe two ſorts of tradition, as the atheiſt ſeems to allow, when he diſtinguiſhes one from the other. Now theſe principles are not, I think, hard to find, and the rule that reſults from them, is ſimple and plain.

Common ſenſe requires that every thing propoſed to the underſtanding, ſhould be accompanied with ſuch proofs as the nature of it can furniſh. He who requires more, is guilty of abſurdity. He who requires leſs, of raſhneſs. As the nature of the propoſition decides, what proofs are exigible and what not, ſo the kind of proof determines the claſs into which the propoſition is to be ranged. He, for inſtance, who affirms, that there is a God, advances a propoſition which is an object of demonſtrative knowledge alone, and a demonſtration is required from him. If he makes the demonſtration, we are obliged to own that we know there is a God, and the propoſition becomes a judgment of nature, not merely an opinion, according to the diſtinction made ſomewhere in Tully; tho demonſtrations are ſometimes called opinions, as opinions are often called demonſtrations. If, by his fault or by ours, we have not a clear perception of the ideas or of the connection of them which form this demonſtration, or if, without troubling ourſelves to follow it, we receive the propoſition for true on the authority of others, it is, indeed, opinion, not knowledge in us. But whether we receive it, or whether we reject it, we can neither require nor employ, with propriety, any other proofs than thoſe which are conformable to the na-

ture of the propoſition. Tradition is not one of them. It may prove that men have generally believed a God, but it cannot prove that ſuch a Being exiſts. Nothing can be more trifling, therefore, than to inſiſt, as theiſts are apt to do, on this proof, as if the opinion proved the fact; as if all men had been alike capable of the demonſtration; or, as if the demonſtration was not neceſſary to eſtabliſh the truth of the opinion. Demonſtration, indeed, is not neceſſary on the hypotheſis, that all men have an innate idea of God. But this hypotheſis has been, I think, long exploded. I do not remember, at leaſt, to have heard it maintained by more than one archbiſhop, two or three ignorant monks, and as many devout ladies.

As much as I am convinced of the exiſtence of a ſupreme, all-perfect Being, as ſeriouſly as I adore his majeſty, bleſs his goodneſs, and reſign myſelf chearfully to his providence, I ſhould be ſorry to reſt my conviction on the authority of any man, or of all mankind: ſince authority cannot be, and demonſtration is, the ſole proper proof in this caſe. Should I quote to the atheiſt, a SUPHIS, an AMENOPHIS, an ORUS, or any of thoſe pretended contemplators of divinity, he would laugh at me with reaſon; tho he might allow, at the ſame time, that theſe ſeers, who acknowledged inferior beings, beings little raiſed above humanity, were infinitely leſs abſurd than thoſe who had the front to aſſert, that they ſaw the inviſible God, and converſed familiarly with him. The demonſtration of his exiſtence ariſes from ſenſitive knowledge; ſince it is "à poſteriori" only that we can prove the firſt cauſe to be an intelligent cauſe: but he is not for that an object of ſenſitive knowledge. This propoſition, therefore, "there is a "God," which becomes a judgment of nature, an object of demonſtrative knowledge to every one who can make the demonſtration,

monſtration, or underſtand it when it is made, comes down as an opinion only, in tradition, and can paſs for nothing better on that authority.

Is this now the caſe of that propoſition which affirms the beginning of the world? Reaſon alone can authoriſe the firſt, and when I ſubſcribe to the truth of it, I do this without any regard to tradition. All that tradition tells me, is that men made the ſame judgment four or five thouſand years ago. If it told me, that they made a contrary judgment, and believed the world eternal, I ſhould make ſtill the ſame on a ſubject concerning which, we of this age, are as competent judges as the men who lived at any time before us.—This propoſition, "the world had a beginning," affirms a fact long ago paſt, and which can, therefore, be received for true on no other authority than that of men who lived long ago, and at, or near the time when this event happened. I conſult my reaſon, indeed, to examine whether the fact implies contradiction, no more, and when I find that it does not, I receive it for true, on the faith of human teſtimony, which is the proper proof, to me, of every fact whereof I have not been, myſelf, a witneſs, and without any regard to the ſuppoſed conformity of it to the general ideas of mankind. This ſuppoſed conformity, if it be real, will add nothing to the probability of the fact, as a non-conformity will take none away. Nothing, therefore, can be more trifling than the cavil made by the atheiſt, when he objects that the more probable this tradition is, the more reaſon we have to take it for an univerſal tradition of opinion, not of fact. The cavil is not only trifling, but to the laſt degree abſurd; for on this principle it will follow, that the more probable a fact is, the leſs reaſon we have to receive it, as a true fact, on hiſtorical or traditional authority. I conſult my reaſon and my experience to diſcover whether the fact, I am told,

may have happened poſſibly, and then I conſult hiſtory and tradition to diſcover whether it has happened actually. But, according to Damon's logic, the more my reaſon and my experience ſhew me the firſt, the more reaſon I have to believe that hiſtory and tradition record, in every ſuch caſe, an antient opinion, not an antient fact.

But it is time that I ſhould haſten to a concluſion, by ſhewing, in the laſt place, that if the world had not really had a beginning, the opinion of it's eternity would have been the general opinion of antiquity, and the commencement of it would not have been tranſmitted by tradition, either as a fact, or, perhaps, as an opinion. Tho men might, in all ages, demonſtrate the exiſtence of God, they could not demonſtrate alike, in any age, the commencement of the world: and, accordingly, we ſee that ſome philoſophers, who believed there was a firſt principle, a firſt intelligent cauſe, a ſupreme Being, held, at the ſame time, that the world was eternal, far from being induced by their theiſm, to believe it had a commencement. Others were, I doubt not, confirmed in the opinion that there was a God, or even led to believe it, and to ſeek the demonſtration of it, by the proofs they had of this fact, the world had a beginning in time. It is much more probable, that the received fact gave occaſion to or fortified the opinion, than that the opinion determined them to aſſume the fact.

The atheiſt, who looks on both to be nothing more than traditional opinions, will be very indifferent which of them paſſes for the firſt. He blends them together, and attributes that of God's exiſtence, to the ſuperſtition of mankind, and to the policy of legiſlators. It might ſeem hard to attribute that of the beginning of the world to the ſame principles, ſince it

ſeems to have little or no relation to them. He contents himſelf therefore, at leaſt DAMON did ſo with me, to inſiſt that philoſophers might eaſily fall into an opinion, which ſaved them much trouble in accounting for the original of things, by the ſuppoſition of an eternal Being, infinitely wiſe and powerful. But the atheiſt would do well to conſider, that this ſeeming ſolution of a difficulty implies a very real abſurdity, for it implies that there were philoſophers as ſoon as there were men. He would do well to conſider, further, that when there were philoſophers, thoſe, who admitted the exiſtence of ſuch a Being, were not the leſs curious in their reſearches of the mechanical cauſes of all the phaenomena. In ſhort, he would do well to conſider, that theſe philoſophers would have cut the gordian knots of all their difficulties, by aſſuming the eternity of the world, much more eaſily than they could untie them, by aſſuming that a Being infinitely wiſe and powerful had made it. They might have ſaid, in this caſe, once for all, things have been eternally as they are. To what purpoſe ſhould we ſeek the original and eſſential cauſes of that which never began?

BUT further, if we paſs over the abſurdity of ſuppoſing that there were philoſophers, as ſoon as there were men, or the improbability of this ſuppoſition, that the commencement of the world was not believed till philoſophers taught it; I would ſtill aſk, and the atheiſt would be puzzled to tell me, how the belief of the commencement of the world could be eſtabliſhed, not only where philoſophy and ſcience floriſhed; but even univerſally, among nations who had no communication with theſe, and who were, themſelves, the leaſt civiliſed and the moſt ignorant? If it be ſaid that, unciviliſed and ignorant as they were, this opinion might ariſe and ſpread among them, becauſe it was agreeable to their general notions, and analogous

to what daily experience ſhewed them, in innumerable inſtances, as well as to what they themſelves were able to do; I muſt aſſert, on the contrary, this opinion was repugnant to the natural character of the human mind; to what we may feel in ourſelves, and obſerve in all other men. All men are, in one reſpect, diſciples of Protagoras. Uninſtructed nature teaches them, like him, that man is the meaſure of all things; that our ſenſations communicate certain knowledge; that every thing is what it appears to us to be; and that the things, which do not appear to us, are not. He who ſees no inequality between two objects, affirms that they are equal, and we judge naturally of the reality of all objects by the perceptions we have of them. Antient aſtronomers believed the ſtars to be immovably fixed in a ſolid firmament, and never ſuſpected them to incline to the pole, or to decline from it. The ſea was thought to have no bounds, becauſe the bounds of it were unknown, and the celeſtial bodies to be incorruptible, becauſe no changes were diſcerned in them. Philoſophers reaſon often, and the vulgar always, like the roſes in Fontenelle. A compariſon taken from thoſe inſects, who live one day only, would have been more to his purpoſe; but roſes were more worthy than inſects to be offered to the marquis, and ſuch a philoſopher as Fontenelle, might diſpenſe with ſome want of preciſion in favor of his gallantry. Such as I have deſcribed it, is the natural character of the human mind. It infects all our judgments, moral as well as phyſical, till we learn to correct it by experience and a long courſe of reflection. This the unciviliſed ignorant people, we ſpeak of, could not do, and it was, therefore, agreeable to the general diſpoſition of their minds, to believe that things had been always, ſuch as they ſaw them to be.

This muſt have been univerſally the caſe, I think, in countries where the natural, unimproved character of the human mind prevailed alone. In thoſe, which philoſophy began to enlighten, ſome might doubt of this eternity; but ſome other philoſophers, and the people in general, would continue to believe it. From whence can we imagine that they ſhould derive a contrary opinion? Their experience ſhewed them, indeed, generation and corruption; that particular things began, and then ceaſed to be; but they ſaw, on the whole, an uniform ſeries of the ſame revolutions of things; their ideas were conformable to the experience which framed them, and the eternity of the world was conformable to theſe ideas. Such conſiderations may ſerve to ſhew, what I have advanced, that the eternity of the world might have been the univerſal tradition, but that the commencement of it could not have been ſo, if it had not commenced, and men had not known that it had. On this hypotheſis, all the conſequences of it follow naturally. One conſequence is, that, ſince the world and mankind began in time, the tradition of this beginning ſhould be a little more or a little leſs obſcurely, but univerſally known, and this conſequence has followed. Another conſequence is, that men, who believed the world to have been created, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, or that the confuſed matter of a chaos was reduced into a mundane ſyſtem, muſt have believed, that this ſtupendous ſyſtem was produced by ſome principle unknown to them, and ſuperior to itſelf; for they could not fail to perceive, on the firſt notices of ſenſe, and the firſt eſſays of reaſon, that the idea of an effect included neceſſarily, in it, the idea of a cauſe. This conſequence followed likewiſe. Once more, altho the firſt men could doubt no more that ſome cauſe of the world, than that the world itſelf, exiſted, yet another conſequence of this great event, and of

the ſurpriſe, inexperience, and ignorance of mankind muſt have been much doubt and uncertainty concerning the firſt cauſe; and this likewiſe followed. Cudworth has endeavoured to prove, many have thought, and I incline to think, that the unity of a firſt intelligent cauſe was the original belief of mankind. But if it was ſo, a belief ſoon ſucceeded that gods, coadjutors to the firſt, in making and governing the world, as well as inferior gods, and men, and the whole material world, proceeded from this eternal ſource of all exiſtence. I need not enumerate any of thoſe various hypotheſes, that aroſe from ſuch abſurd notions. Many of them have continued, to this day, and are held even by chriſtians, whom revelation as well as reaſon enlightens. The tradition of the fact, that the world began, and that of the opinion, that God is, have come down to us, tho not entirely without oppoſition, from the moſt early ages. But the manner of God's being, and of his working in the creation, and government of the world, have been matters of diſpute in all ages, ever ſince preſumptuous mortals affected to deſcend into particulars, to know any thing at all of one, or any thing more of the other, than that he is ſelf-exiſtent and all-perfect, and that his will, relatively to his human creatures, is revealed to them in the conſtitution of their ſyſtem.

To conclude. I am far from reſting the proof of God's exiſtence on the authority of this tradition, that the world began. I know that we are able to demonſtrate this fundamental truth of all religion, whether it began or no. But ſince we cannot reject this tradition without renouncing almoſt all we know, and ſince it leads men to acknowledge a ſupreme Being, by a proof levelled to the meaneſt underſtanding, I think we ought to inſiſt upon it. I am the more confirmed in thinking ſo, by the effect it had in the diſpute

of

of which I have given you ſome account. DAMON was embarraſſed by it ſo much, that he had recourſe at laſt to the wild hypotheſis of DEMOCRITUS and EPICURUS, if we really know what that of the former was. This hypotheſis is an abyſs of abſurdity. In that I left him, pitying from the bottom of my heart, for I love the man, his blindneſs and his obſtinacy; the blindneſs of one who ſees ſo clearly, and the obſtinacy of one who ſhews ſo much candor, on other occaſions.

A

LETTER

Occaſioned by one of

Archbiſhop TILLOTSON's SERMONS.

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I COME from reading, in BARBEYRAC's tranſlation of TILLOTSON's ſermons, the diſcourſe you mentioned on a late occaſion; and the effect of it has been to confirm me in this opinion, that the theiſt is a much more formidable enemy to the atheiſt than the divine. The former takes all the real advantages againſt a common adverſary, which the latter has it in his power to take; but he gives none againſt himſelf, as the latter is forced to do. When the divine writes or diſputes on any ſubject, relative to his profeſſion, he is always embarraſſed by his theological ſyſtem; whether his mind be ſo: or not, his tongue and his pen cannot be otherwiſe. A theiſt is under no conſtraint of this kind. He may ſpeak the truth, ſuch as it appears to him, when the divine, tho it appears the ſame to him, muſt be ſilent. The theiſt may be ſilent, by regards of prudence, when the divine is obliged to ſpeak, by the obligation of his profeſſion, and to maintain what he cannot defend, as well as what he can: and thus, if he impoſes

on ſome, he expoſes himſelf to the attacks of others. When the theiſt has demonſtrated the exiſtence of a ſupreme, all-perfect Being, and the moral obligations of his rational creatures, he ſtops, where the means of human knowledge ſtop, and makes no vain and preſumptuous efforts to go beyond them, by the help of reaſon or revelation. Juſt ſo, when he has proved that the world had a beginning, on foundations of the higheſt probability tradition can give, he ſtops ſhort likewiſe; becauſe, in the nature of things, we can have no other proof of the fact. Not ſo the divine. His ſyſtem drags him on. He attempts, moſt abſurdly, to ſupport, in the firſt caſe, a demonſtrated truth by falſe arguments; and, in the ſecond, to make tradition vouch for more than any receivable tradition does or can vouch. The Archbiſhop, himſelf, ſeems ſenſible of this in one place: for having aſſerted the univerſal aſſent of mankind to this great truth, that there is a God, and having aſcribed the univerſality of this aſſent to the nature of the human mind, on which God has impreſſed an innate idea of himſelf, he tries to evade the abſurdity by adding, "or which, "that is the human mind, is ſo diſpoſed, that men may diſcover, "by the due uſe of it's faculties, the exiſtence of God." He endeavours to evade the theological abſurdity, which he could not maintain, but he endeavours it in vain: for it is evidently falſe, that the two propoſitions are in any ſort the ſame. The difference between affirming that the mind of man is able, by a due uſe of it's faculties, to diſcover the exiſtence of God, and that the mind of man has an innate idea of this exiſtence, which prevents and excludes the uſe of any mental faculties, except that of bare perception, is too obvious to be inſiſted upon.

Divines reaſon, ſometimes, on this ſubject with more precaution. They ſlide over the doctrine of innate ideas, without maintaining, or renouncing it directly, and think it ſufficient

ficient to ſay, that the belief of a God is founded on a certain natural proportion, which there is, between this great truth and the conceptions of the human mind. I inclined, as you know, to think in the ſame manner, and to believe, that the firſt men, at leaſt, who knew that they were ſuch, and who ſaw the material world begin, would be led, by the natural conceptions of their minds, to acknowledge a firſt Cauſe of infinite wiſdom and power, and far above all theſe conceptions. Thus it ſeemed to me, that the tradition of a fact, and of an opinion grounded on it, which are apt to be confounded, tho they ſhould be always diſtinguiſhed, might come down together. But I confeſs myſelf obliged, on further reflection, to abandon this hypotheſis. I abandon it with the leſs regret, becauſe, whatever the firſt men might think, nay, whether the world had a beginning in time, as I am firmly perſuaded it had, or not, the demonſtration of God's exiſtence will remain unſhaken. But I am obliged to abandon it, becauſe a natural and intimate proportion between the exiſtence of God, and the univerſal conceptions of the human mind may appear chimerical, and perhaps is ſo. It is, I doubt, chimerical, even when it is applied to the firſt men. The variety of the phaenomena, which ſtruck their ſenſes, would lead the generality, moſt probably, to imagine a variety of cauſes, and more obſervations and deeper reflections, than the firſt men could make, were neceſſary to prove the unity of the firſt cauſe. That ſome made them, at leaſt very early, can ſcarce be doubted. So that the orthodox belief and polytheiſm might grow up together, tho the latter might ſpread wider and faſter than the former.

If there was really ſuch a proportion, or ſuch a conformity, as is aſſumed, particular men, philoſophers here and there, might have held polytheiſm notwithſtanding this; but the ge-

neral opinion of mankind would have been the orthodox opinion, inſtead of which we know that polytheiſm and idolatry prevailed almoſt every where. Polytheiſm and idolatry, therefore, ſeem more conformable to human ideas, abſtracted from the firſt appearances of things and better proportioned, by an analogy of human conceptions, to the uncultivated reaſon of mankind, and to underſtandings not ſufficiently informed. Our archbiſhop ſuppoſes it objected to him, that the general conſent of mankind in acknowledging one God does not prove that there is one, any more than the general conſent of numberleſs nations in acknowledging ſeveral proves that there are ſeveral. He anſwers the objection by ſaying, that philoſophers and wiſe men, in every nation and in every age, were of a different opinion from the vulgar, ſo that the heterodox opinion cannot pretend to have general conſent on it's ſide, ſince the opinions of the vulgar, oppoſed to thoſe of philoſophers and wiſe men, can be received into this reckoning no otherwiſe than like a multitude of noughts without any figure. This is ſtrange reaſoning to fall from the pen of ſo great a man. It is certain, that the orthodox belief maintained itſelf in ſome minds, perhaps in ſome nations, and pierced thro all the darkneſs of ignorant ages; but yet polytheiſm, and the conſequence of it, idolatry, were avowed and taught by legiſlators and by philoſophers. Neither will it avail any thing to ſay, that theſe men had their inward, as well as their outward doctrine, and that they taught, in private, the contrary of what they taught in public. On this very ſuppoſition it will ſtill follow, that polytheiſm and idolatry prevailed more eaſily, becauſe they were more conformable to the natural conceptions of the human mnid, than the belief of one firſt intelligent cauſe, the ſole creator, preſerver, and governor of all things. It is abſurd to ſay, that the conſent of ſome wiſe men, and even of ſome nations, inſtructed and governed by them, in the acknowledge-

ment of one ſupreme Being, is a proof that this idea is innate in all men, or univerſally proportioned to the conceptions of all men, and to deny that the almoſt univerſal conſent of mankind, in the acknowledgement of ſeveral gods, is a proof of the contrary.

If you are not very well ſatisfied with theſe theological reaſonings, as I think you are not, you will be no better ſatisfied with the manner in which our archbiſhop attempts to prove that the world had a beginning. The queſtion, which is commonly put to thoſe who maintain the eternity of it would be trifling, as well as trite, if it did not oblige the atheiſt to give an anſwer which implies, in his mouth, the greateſt abſurdity, and makes him pronounce, in effect, his own condemnation. Tillotson takes this advantage, as I have done; but he throws it away, when he has taken it, by applying it againſt thoſe who may think the world more antient than the theological æra makes it to be, tho they do not believe it eternal. He aſſerts that the moſt antient hiſtories were writ long after this æra, and quotes to prove it, ſome verſes of Lucretius, finely writ, but very little to the purpoſe, becauſe of no authority in this caſe.

" —— Si nulla fuit genitalis origo
" Terrarum et coeli, ſemperque eterna fuêre;
" Cur ſupra bellum Thebanum, et funera Trojae,
" Non alias alii quoque res cecinêre poëtae?"

Men have been always fond, not only to carry the originals of their ſeveral nations as far back as they could, and to repreſent them, ſometimes, as coæval with the world itſelf, but to eſtabliſh their own, or the traditions which had come to them, as the moſt antient of all traditions. Thus the

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roman poet employed thoſe of Greece to prove that the world had not begun very long before the wars of Thebes and of Troy. The world had a beginning, ſays the Jew; for there is neither hiſtory nor tradition more antient than MOSES; and we know by his writings how, and how long ago, the world was created. If we bring a Chineſe into the ſcene, he will aſſure us that the world had a beginning; becauſe the cycles, of three-ſcore years each, in the chronological tables of his nation do not riſe any higher than HOAM-TI, who reigned about four thouſand four hundred years before our aera; that from him to XIN-NUM, the ſucceſſor of FOHI, there are not more than three hundred and eighty years, and that FOHI was the firſt that civiliſed mankind. It was he, will the Chineſe continue to ſay, who left us the adorable and hitherto incomprehenſible Yekin, in the explication of which our learned men have labored theſe two thouſand ſix hundred years. It was FOHI and XIN-NUM who taught men the uſe of the plough, who invented letters, and to whom all arts and ſciences owe their original. Let a learned Mexican come forward next, and he will aſſure you, not only, that the world began, but that the time when it began is known; for we had but nine kings before MONTE-ZUMA, will this great chronologer ſay. TENUCH was the firſt of them, and the founder of our monarchy; our hieroglyphical annals riſe no higher; we know nothing beyond him; this calculation is confirmed by that of our neighbours, whoſe traditions place the deſtruction of the laſt ſun, and the beginning of this, but a little before our aera. Let a Peruvian follow the Mexican, he will aſſure us, that the inca MANCO-CAPAC preceded ATAHUALPA, about four hundred years; that he and his ſiſter, COYA-MAMA-OELLO-HUACO, were ſent, at that time, by their father, the ſun, to civiliſe mankind, who could not have been long in being, ſince they had neither civil polity nor religion, ſince they knew neither how to build

houſes, ſpin wool or cotton to cover their nakedneſs, nor to till their lands. Theſe are the traditions of the eaſt and of the weſt. The former make the world more antient than thoſe of the Jews, as they ſtand in the Hebrew, at leaſt; the latter place the commencement of it about the beginning of the twelfth century of the chriſtian aera, that is about the time of your king LOUIS LE GROS, and of our firſt norman princes. Our learned Europeans may laugh, as much as they pleaſe, at theſe learned Americans: but they muſt not be offended, if they are laughed at, in their turn, by thoſe who think, that if CADMUS, the cook of a certain king of Sidon, carried the uſe of letters, and his ſon, or his grandſon, BACCHUS, the culture of the vine, to the Greeks three thouſand years before MANCA-CAPAC civiliſed the Peruvians, it may very well be, that the Atlantic, or ſome other nation ſtill more unknown to us, had made all theſe improvements, by a long experience, three thouſand years before the Greeks, or even their maſters, who boaſted of a much greater antiquity, the Egyptians.

A CROWD of reflections preſents itſelf; but theſe may ſerve to ſhew how ridiculous it is, whilſt we receive on the faith of univerſal tradition this fact, "the world had a beginning," to go about to fix the aera of it according to thoſe of any particular nations. The negative argument, "we have no memo-"rials beyond ſuch a time," proves nothing but our ignorance; and the poſitive argument, that, "we have relations of the be-"ginning of arts and ſciences in ſeveral countries;" proves nothing more than what it is very needleſs to prove; I mean, that there was a time, when every one of theſe nations began to be civiliſed. Neither of theſe arguments is of weight againſt the atheiſt who aſſerts the eternity of the world. But they give him an advantage, ſuch as it is, which bad arguments give frequently in polemical writings; and having refuted theſe, he

he may triumph, as if he had refuted all the reſt, which is a practice very common among his adverſaries the divines.

If the divine had not more at heart to eſtabliſh the credit of jewiſh traditions than the commencement of the world, he would not proceed as he does. He would not neglect the univerſal tradition of a naked fact, ſuch as tradition may preſerve, to inſiſt on particular traditions of a fact ſo complicated with circumſtances, that no tradition could preſerve it. Theſe circumſtances might make the fact doubtful; the fact will never make them probable. Even that of the time, when the preſent ſyſtem of things began, has been ſupported weakly, I will not, tho, I think, I might ſay fraudulently, by jewiſh rabbins and by chriſtian doctors, from Julius Africanus, and Eusebius, and George the monk, down to Stillingfleet, whom I mention, particularly, becauſe Tillotson ventures to aſſert, that he has proved, in his Origines Sacrae, the chronological traditions of the Egyptians, and the Chaldaeans, to agree with thoſe of the Bible. If he had proved this, which he has not, moſt certainly, he would have proved nothing more than what the Mexicans aſſert, that the traditions of two or three neighbouring nations, all derived probably enough from one original, are conformable to one another. But it is, indeed, too bold an impoſition to pretend to prove, by deſcending into particulars of facts and dates, any thing of this kind. Our learned antiquaries have no other materials than a certain number of broken, incoherent, and precarious traditions. Theſe they make to cohere, for the moſt part, by gueſs, and then drag them to a ſeeming conformity with the moſaical ſyſtem, which they aſſume, all along, to be true, whilſt they pretend to prove it to be ſo by collateral evidence. I will only add, to ſhew how impertinent all this admired learning ought to be deemed, that

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by little differences, in the arrangement of the ſame materials, and by a no greater liberty of gueſſing, diſtinct, oppoſite, and yet equal probabilities may be made to reſult from them. I affirm this the more confidently, becauſe I tried it once, as you may remember, and we both thought that the trial ſucceeded very plauſibly.

But without inſiſting any longer on this head; to ſhew how divines weaken the ſhort and plain proof that we have of the beginning of the world, let us grant, for argument's ſake, that the moſt antient traditions are the moſaical, and that arts and ſciences have not been invented more than four or five thouſand years, or more or leſs as they think fit. Will they prove, even by this conceſſion, that the world has had a beginning? They cannot: for the atheiſt will object that he may have reaſon to think the world eternal, without being obliged to think the arts and ſciences eternal likewiſe. He will maintain it to be indifferent, in his hypotheſis, when or where they began; ſince at whatever aera the divine places this beginning, an eternity muſt have preceded this aera. The divine, therefore, will be obliged to ſhew that it implies contradiction to aſſert that the world is from eternity, and not to aſſert that arts and ſciences are ſo likewiſe. He will endeavour this by aſſuming, as Tillotson does, that arts and ſciences are neceſſary to the well-being of mankind, and even to their being; that neceſſity, the great mother of induſtry and of invention, ſet mankind to work as ſoon, and as faſt, as the ſpecies began and multiplied, in ſome places with more, in others with leſs, of theſe, but in all with as much as their real wants required. Since you agree then, will the divine ſay to the atheiſt, that arts and ſciences began about the time we have fixed, the world muſt have begun about the time we have fixed likewiſe. This reaſoning is commonly employed againſt thoſe atheiſts who aſſume that the world is eternal. But

without being one of their number, I venture to ſay that this reaſoning is frivolous, and founded on a ſuppoſition which the men, who make it, muſt know to be falſe. The different aeras of arts and ſciences, invented in ſome countries, and carried into others, are ſo diſtant, even according to the received chronology, that the men who diſpenſed with the want of them, during ſuch long intervals, might have diſpenſed with it longer, and in many caſes, always. Are there not nations, at this hour, whoſe originals are unknown to us, who may be the Aborigines of the countries they inhabit, and who are ignorant, not only of all ſcience, but of many arts ſuppoſed neceſſary; not only of letters, for inſtance, but of thoſe, which ſerve to defend us againſt the inclemency of the air and the rigor of the ſeaſons, by making cloaths and building houſes ſufficient for this purpoſe? Theſe arts muſt have their place, ſurely, among thoſe which TILLOTSON reckons ſo neceſſary, or, at leaſt, ſo uſeful to mankind, that they could not fail to be invented, nor when they were invented, to be preſerved. But his reaſoning will not hold here neither; for if theſe arts were ever known to the people, to whom they are now unknown, they may be totally loſt, after having been once found: nay, they may have been found, loſt, and found anew, an infinite number of times, in an eternal duration. If theſe arts were never known to the people, to whom they are now unknown, it follows that mankind may diſpenſe with the want of them during many ages, and therefore, always. We may eaſily conceive that Samojedes, Hottentots, and other notions as barbarous and ignorant as theſe, have always been, and will always remain, in the ſame ſtate of barbarity and ignorance.

TILLOTSON was led by his prejudices, and by the examples of men, much inferior to him, in the herd of divines, into the two abſurdities I have obſerved to you already; into that of proving the commencement of the world by the authority of

of particular traditions, which conſidered ſeparately amount to no proof at all, inſtead of reſting his proofs ſolely on the authority of univerſal tradition: and into that of confounding traditions of opinion with traditions of fact. He inſiſts not only on traditions which concur in affirming that the world began, but on thoſe which enter into a detail of circumſtances, concerning the manner in which it began. Nay more, he joins the exiſtence of God and the commencement of the world together, as if tradition was proper alike to prove both theſe truths. His proceeding is much the ſame with that of MAXIMUS of Tyre, whom he cites, after GROTIUS. Both he and GROTIUS might have quoted this rhetor, tho they were far from doing ſo, againſt EUSEBIUS, who was unwilling to allow that the ſupreme Being was acknowledged by the heathens before chriſtianity had enlightened the world, but the quotation of him, on this occaſion, proves nothing, and ſerves only to ſhew that our divines declaim as looſely as the heathen philoſopher. MAXIMUS of Tyre alledges the univerſal conſent of mankind in one law or tradition, ſo I believe thoſe words Νομον ἐξ Λογον, ſhould be tranſlated, "legem famamque," and not, as TILLOTSON tranſlates them, "law and principle." Now this law and tradition, according to MAXIMUS of Tyre, declares, that there is one God, the king and father of all things, and ſeveral other Gods, the ſons of the Supreme, who take their parts with him in the government of the world. MAXIMUS was a platonician, and he meant, no doubt, to give reputation to the dogmas of his ſect, by aſſuming them all to be received in one general tradition by the Greek and the Barbarian; by thoſe who inhabit the continent, and by thoſe who live on the coaſts of the ſea; by thoſe who have wiſdom, and by thoſe who have none. TILLOTSON was a chriſtian, and he meant to make the dogmas of his ſect, as well concerning the beginning of the world, as concerning the creator of it,

to paſs for thoſe of univerſal tradition. If we ſuppoſe that the firſt men were led, inſtantly, by the phaenomena, and without any other demonſtration, to acknowledge a ſupreme intelligent cauſe, the opinion roſe from the fact, of which they were witneſſes; but it was opinion ſtill in them, tho it became afterwards demonſtrated knowledge. Now divines tranſpoſe this order, and make the creation of the world, which tradition vouches primarily, to be, as it were, a ſecondary tradition; that is, they make the tradition of fact to follow the opinion, inſtead of making the opinion to be founded on the fact. They give great advantage to the atheiſt, by blending all theſe things together, for the atheiſt will not, tho the theiſt will, diſtinguiſh what they have confounded. He will look on all theſe different propoſitions alike, and as traditions only of different opinions.

After having ſaid, what has been here ſaid, concerning the advantage which, I apprehend, that divines give to atheiſts by the abſurd manner in which they employ tradition, I will obſerve another advantage, which the atheiſt may take, from ſome abſtract reaſonings that they employ to ſupport this tradition. The theiſt is modeſt. He is content to know what God has done, and he acknowledges it, for that very reaſon, wiſe and good, right and fit to be done. But the divine is not ſo modeſt. It is not enough for him to know, that God made the world, and to fix the time when it was made, he preſumes, with much theological oſtentation, to explain the motives that determined the ſupreme Being, to create the world and the inhabitants of it, men at leaſt. The atheiſt objects that theſe motives muſt have been eternal, ſince the divine attributes, from which they are deduced, are certainly eternal, in the ſyſtem of the divine, and that it is impoſſible, therefore, to conceive that the ſupreme Being ſhould neglect doing, during

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an eternity, what it was conformable to his wiſdom and goodneſs, and ſuitable to his power from all eternity to do. The divine may ſay, and he will ſay, no doubt, that whenever God, who is himſelf eternal, had created the world, an eternity muſt have preceded this creation, and that the objection, the atheiſt makes, would be juſt as ſtrong, if he aſſumed that the world began ſix millions of years ſooner, as it is when he places the aera of it according to the jewiſh and chriſtian chronology. He will employ the ſame ſort of reaſoning, in this caſe, againſt the atheiſt, which the atheiſt employed againſt him in another; that is, in the caſe of the commencement of arts and ſciences; he will put the atheiſt on proving that it implies contradiction to believe God eternal, and not to believe the eternity of the world. To this, it may be, the atheiſt would reply, that the contradiction in believing one and not believing the other ariſes, like a ſelf-evident truth, from what the divine himſelf affirms, and that the evidence is too great to need any demonſtration and therefore incapable of any, like many other truths of which we have an immediate intuitive perception. From hence the atheiſt would inſiſt that all the motives, which the divine aſſerts a ſupreme Being had to create the world in time, are unanſwerable reaſons to prove it eternal; arguments for his ſyſtem, in part at leaſt, and, as far as the eternity of the world is concerned, in the whole.

A THEIST, who ſtood by, might, perhaps, ſuggeſt to the divine an expedient whereby to get out of the difficulty wherein he has involved himſelf by preſuming to ſpecify the motives which the ſupreme Being had to create the world in time. The theiſt would adviſe him, like a good ally, (for ſuch he is ſometimes to the divine, tho he is never ſuch to the atheiſt, as the divine is on ſome occaſions) he would adviſe, I ſay, the divine to keep a little more preciſion in the uſe of words. Sometimes the world ſtands for

for the whole univerſe, and ſometimes for our planet only. The divine muſt underſtand it, as Moses does, and believe by conſequence that the whole univerſe began to exiſt, when Moses tells him, that the ſun, our earth, the other planets, in ſhort our ſolar ſyſtem, began to exiſt: for the legiſlator of the Jews included no other in his idea of the univerſe. He would adviſe the divine, therefore, to diſtinguiſh better between the univerſe and the world; to affirm that our planet, or, at moſt, our ſolar ſyſtem, began in time, which is the utmoſt that Moses can be underſtood to have meaned, and to affirm nothing of the univerſe, of which Moses knew nothing, and he only knows that it is. Thus the reaſons he gives, why God created the world, we inhabit, no ſooner, may be a little better ſupported than they can be on the ſuppoſition that he created nothing before it, and was the eternal cauſe of no ſuch effects, as his phyſical attributes enabled, and his moral attributes required him to produce. The theiſt might add, that, tho we ſhould ſuppoſe the univerſe to be eternal, like it's Author, the eternal effect of an eternal cauſe, nothing will hinder us from aſſuming at the ſame time, on the faith of tradition, as he does, or on this and other foundations, as the divine does, that our world, and even our ſolar ſyſtem began in time. A conſtant rotation from exiſtence to non-exiſtence or from generation to diſſolution, and ſo back again, maintains our world and the inhabitants of it in being. Why ſhould not ſuch a rotation of worlds and ſyſtems of worlds maintain the univerſe in being?

But it is time to conſider the hiſtorical, as we have conſidered the traditional proofs, which the archbiſhop brings of the beginning of the world. I will quote his own words, as they ſtand in Barbeyrac's tranſlation; for if I did not quote them, you would hardly believe that I make him ſay no more than he

did ſay. He ſays then, " We have likewiſe an hiſtory of the " commencement of the world, the moſt antient and the " moſt credible that could be deſired. This hiſtory is that of " MOSES, an author ſo antient that no other can ſtand in com- " petition with him, in this reſpect. I might add, that this " writer has all the characters of a divine authority, and prove " it by ſuch good reaſons, as would give a great weight to his " teſtimony in the minds of all thoſe who believe a God. But " ſuch arguments are not proper to be employed againſt the " atheiſt with whom we diſpute at preſent. I aſk no more, " than that the ſame credit may be given to MOSES, as we " give to every other hiſtorian. Now this cannot be refuſed " him reaſonably, ſince he is quoted by the moſt antient hea- " then hiſtorians, and ſince the antiquity of his writings has " never been conteſted by any of them, as JOSEPHUS main- " tains."

THIS is my text. I ſhall make ſome few remarks upon it, and this general remark in the firſt place. It has been ſaid, truly enough, that the court of Rome has eſtabliſhed many maxims and claims of right, by affirming them conſtantly and boldly againſt evident exiſting proofs of the contrary. The jewiſh and the chriſtian church have proceeded by the ſame rule of policy, and the authority of the pentateuch, to ſay no- thing here of the other books of the old teſtament, has been eſtabliſhed entirely and ſolely on the affirmation of the Jews, or, at beſt, on ſeeming and equivocal proofs, ſuch as JOSEPHUS brings againſt ſuch evident marks of falſhood as can be objected to no other writings, except to profeſſed romances, nor even al- ways to them.

IT was the pride of the Jews to believe themſelves, and to make others believe if they could, not only that their nation

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was the elect people of God, but that it was of an immenſe antiquity, and that they poſſeſſed the moſt antient of all authentic records. JOSEPHUS (who had as much of this pride about him as any Jew or Phariſee of them all, and who ſtuck, as little, at any abſurdity, as any antient or modern rabbin) endeavoured to promote theſe opinions among the Greeks and the Romans by his writings, tho with very little ſucceſs. TILLOTSON, like other chriſtian doctors, had a better motive than that of mere ambition, tho it was not quite foreign from ambition neither, to ſupport the authority of the pentateuch. Whether JESUS CHRIST, or St. PAUL, aboliſhed the ceremonial law of MOSES, or whether the former grafted on this law, as the latter thought fit to graft on his goſpel, let us leave it to divines to decide. In all caſes chriſtianity was founded on judaiſm, and the new teſtament ſuppoſes the truth of the old. Our divines, therefore, are obliged to ſupport the old, as well as they can, in order to ſupport the new. The authority of theſe books is maintained, in ſome countries, by inquiſitors and hangmen. In a country like ours where arguments alone can be employed, divines may be indulged in the uſe of all the good and the bad indifferently, that they may give up nothing; for where every part may be alike attacked, every part may be alike defended. Two cautions, however, theſe reverend perſons would do well to obſerve. One to inſiſt chiefly on the external proofs of the divine authenticity of the ſcriptures and to pour forth, on that head, all their ſtock of Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, and Latin, but to dwell very little on the internal marks of a divine character. They might ſilence thoſe perhaps, on the firſt kind of proof, by their tranſlations and commentaries, whom they will never convince, on the ſecond, by fair reaſoning; and might avoid a great deal of that blaſphemy, which they talk on both; a circumſtance, ſurely, that deſerves ſome regard from them. Another caution is this,

that they ſhould make war rather defenſively than offenſively, that they ſhould take the only true advantage of the diſcretion of their adverſaries, which would be to return it with diſcretion; for their adverſaries ſeldom ſpeak out, nor puſh the inſtances and arguments they bring, as far as they might be carried. Inſtead of which theſe orthodox bullies affect to triumph over men, who employ but a part of their ſtrength; tire them with impertinent paradoxes; and provoke them by unjuſt reflections, and, often, by the foulest language.

After this long, and, I hope, charitable remark, it is time to conſider how Tillotson proves that we have hiſtorical, as well as traditional, evidence of the beginning of the world. This evidence is that of Moses: and to give it the more weight, he inſiſts on the great antiquity of the hiſtorian. This antiquity will not be diſputed, perhaps, and it will be allowed that no other hiſtory of the ſame aſſumed antiquity has come down to us. But then it will be aſked, what materials Moses could have before him when he writ the book of Geneſis, which is in ſome ſort a preface to the pentateuch, or at leaſt, the firſt chapters of it, wherein he relates moſt circumſtantially the creation of the world, and the whole progreſs of that great event? Divines have their anſwer ready. Moses was not a cotemporary author, but he might write upon cotemporary authority. Twenty-five centuries paſſed indeed between the creation and him, but his materials were, notwithſtanding that, extremely freſh and authentic, ſince they muſt have gone thro very few hands, in ages when men lived ſo long, to come into his, whether we ſuppoſe them written or unwritten. This may be ſaid, it has been often ſaid, and always very weakly, to the purpoſe that is mentioned here; for if Moses had taken his materials from the mouth of Adam, himſelf, they would not have been ſufficient vouchers

of all that he relates. ADAM might have related to him the paſſages of the ſixth day, ſomething even of his own creation, at leaſt from the moment that God breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life: but ADAM could have told him nothing that preceded this, even on the ſixth day, nor, by conſequence, on the other five, wherein the whole material world was created. MOSES therefore, notwithſtanding his antiquity, may afford an inſtance in proof of the univerſality of the tradition, but no more. His writings afford no hiſtorical evidence.

OUR archbiſhop aſſures us, that he could have added to the antiquity of this hiſtorian certain characters of a divine authority, and have ſupported them by reaſons which would give great weight to his teſtimony in the minds of all thoſe who acknowledge the exiſtence of God. It is pity he did not think fit to give theſe characters and reaſons; ſince however improper it might have been to urge them againſt an atheiſt, who denies the exiſtence of God, as well as the commencement of the world, they would certainly have been urged very properly againſt a theiſt, who acknowledging both, believes nothing of the divine character of MOSES. But he was too much attached to a rigorous preciſion, and uſed too much candor, in his reaſoning, to mingle the atheiſt and the theiſt together in this diſpute. All he deſires is, what, he thinks, cannot be reaſonably refuſed him, that we give the ſame credit to MOSES, as we ſhould give to any other hiſtorian. We will conſider then, in the laſt place, what characters of a divine authority may be found in the writings of MOSES, and, from this conſideration, we ſhall find reaſon, perhaps, to be the leſs concerned that we have not thoſe which TILLOTSON kept to himſelf on this occaſion. In the mean time, let us continue to judge of MOSES, as

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we ſhould do of any other hiſtorian, ſince it is all that is deſired of us.

Now to conſtitute the authenticity of any hiſtory, theſe are ſome of the conditions neceſſary. It muſt be writ by a cotemporary author, or by one who had cotemporary materials in his hands. It muſt have been publiſhed among men who were able to judge of the capacity of the author, and of the authenticity of the memorials on which he writ. Nothing repugnant to the univerſal experience of mankind muſt be contained in it. The principal facts, at leaſt, which it contains, muſt be confirmed by collateral teſtimony, that is by the teſtimony of thoſe who had no common intereſt of country, of religion, or of profeſſion, to diſguiſe or falſify the truth. That MOSES was not a cotemporary author is allowed, and that he could have no cotemporary authority, for the greateſt part of what he advanced concerning the creation, is proved. Thus far then his writings have no hiſtorical authenticity. Let us ſee whether they have it in any of the other reſpects which I have mentioned. Were they publiſhed among people able to judge of them and of their author? HUETIUS, who writ an evangelical demonſtration, and died a ſceptic, admits, in his demonſtration, that a book, to be deemed authentic, muſt have been received, as ſuch, in the age which followed immediately the publication of it, and in all the ages which followed this. Has it been ſufficiently proved, that the moſaical hiſtory was ſo received? I believe not. There was, it is ſaid, by ABBADIE, I think, a law of MOSES, before ESDRAS, before JOSIAH, and even before DAVID, ſince this famous prophet and king ſpeaks continually of the law of God, and ſince all the other prophets quote the moſt important paſſages of Deuteronomy. The pentateuch too muſt have been in their hands, ſince they ſhew, very clearly, that they had an exact know-

ledge of the facts contained in Geneſis, the leaſt circumſtances of which are referred to by them as circumſtances that no man could be ignorant of. If MOSES writ the hiſtory contained in the book of Geneſis, he writ all the other books that compoſe the pentateuch. ABBADIE aſſumes that this cannot be denied, and that MOSES muſt needs have been a good ſcribe, ſince it was he who recorded, in writing, the words of the covenant made at Horeb.

IT would be hard to find an example of greater trifling: for when we have allowed that the authors of the old teſtament, from DAVID down to ESDRAS, ſpeak not only of the law, but refer to many of the facts related in the pentateuch, it will not follow neceſſarily that the pentateuch, which we have in our hands, was publiſhed in the time of MOSES or immediately after it. Much of the hiſtory, and ſome of the law, perhaps, contained in the writings aſcribed to MOSES, came down to thoſe who quote them, by traditions of uncertain original, tho they were all alike aſcribed, by the Jews, to the ſame legiſlator. This cannot appear improbable to any one who conſiders, that eſtabliſhments ſaid to be made according to the law of MOSES, when the cuſtom of reading this law once in ſeven years to the people was neglected, and when they had actually no body of law extant amongſt them, are mentioned ſometimes in the bible. This had been the caſe when HILKIAH found the law in the temple, which had been loſt long before, and continued to be ſo, during the firſt eighteen or twenty years of good JOSIAH's reign. That the book, thus found, contained nothing but the law of MOSES, ſtrictly ſo called, or than the recapitulation of it, made in Deuteronomy, not the moſaical hiſtory, we may, nay we muſt conclude, from the little time that the reading the book in the preſence of the king,

king, and before it was ſent by his order to the propheteſs HULDAH, took up.

THE Jews had an oral, as well as a written law, and the former has been deemed even more important than the latter. The former however conſiſted of nothing more than traditions, which the rabbin JUDA HAKKODOSH, or the holy, compiled, ſix or ſeven centuries after ESDRAS had compiled the canon of the ſcriptures. In ſhort, there ſeems to have been two collections of antient jewiſh traditions made at different times; and the authors, who preceded ESDRAS, might quote thoſe of one ſort, as authentic facts and divine laws, juſt as well as the doctors, who preceded rabbi JUDA, quoted thoſe of the other, as a commentary on them given by God himſelf on mount Sinai. It will be ſaid, I know, that the authenticity of the pentateuch, given us by ESDRAS, is ſufficiently proved, by the conformity it has, in moſt inſtances, with the pentateuch of the Samaritans, that is of the Cuthaeans, a people ſent from the other ſide of the Euphrates by SALMANASAR to inhabit the country of Samaria, which he had depopulated. This people knew nothing of the moſaical law till ASARHADDON, the ſucceſſor of SALMANASAR, ſent a prieſt of the Jews to inſtruct them in it, who might carry, for aught we know, a pentateuch written in antient Hebrew characters with him. I enter into no examination of theſe precarious accounts, leſt I ſhould go out of my depth; neither need I to do ſo: for if we allow that the pentateuch was public before the time of ESDRAS, JOSIAH, or even DAVID, will it follow that it was ſo as early as would be neceſſary to anſwer that condition of authenticity, which we ſpeak of here? Was there not time more than enough between MOSES and DAVID to make fabulous traditions paſs for authentic hiſtory? Did it take up near ſo much to eſtabliſh the divine authority of the alcoran among the Arabs, a people not more

more incapable to judge of MAHOMET and his book, than we may ſuppoſe the Iſraelites to judge of MOSES, and his book, if he left any, whether of law alone, or of hiſtory and law both?

THE time that the Iſraelites paſſed from the Exode under MOSES, and the four centuries, that they paſſed afterwards under their judges, may be compared, well enough, to the heroical age of the Greeks. Marvellous traditions deſcended from both, and their heroes were much alike. Thoſe of the Greeks were generally baſtards of ſome god or other, and thoſe of the Jews were always appointed by God to defend his people, and to deſtroy their enemies. But AOD, one of theſe, was an aſſaſſin, and JEPHTHA, another, was a captain of banditti, as DAVID was, till, by the help of the prieſts, he obtained the crown; after which, under him, and his ſon SOLOMON, the government of the Iſraelites took a better form; arts and ſciences were cultivated; and their hiſtorical age might begin. It has been urged, by thoſe who ſcruple little what they ſay, that the four centuries, which the Iſraelites paſſed under their judges, were times of adverſity and oppreſſion, wherein they had ſomething elſe to do than to invent fabulous traditions, or that if any ſuch were invented ſo near the times of MOSES and JOSHUA, they muſt have been detected by the Iſraelites themſelves, who would have been far from encouraging traditions ſo injurious to neighbouring nations, of whom they had reaſon to ſtand in awe. Thus it ſeems that times of ignorance, barbarity, and confuſion, were the moſt unlikely to give riſe and currency to fables, and the moſt proper to preſerve the truth of traditions, which muſt, for this ridiculous reaſon, have come down uncorrupted and unmixed. One can hardly imagine any thing ſo extravagant, and yet I can quote, from ABBADIE, a way of reaſoning that is more ſo. You have thought,

I doubt not, hitherto, like other men of ſenſe, that the conſiſtency of a narration is one mark of it's truth; but this great divine will teach you, that the inconſiſtency, not the conſiſtency, is ſuch a mark. MOSES, he ſays, is ſo inconſiſtent with himſelf, that he eſtabliſhes the exiſtence of one God, and then talks as if there were many. He introduces JACOB wreſtling againſt God, and the mortal comes off victorious. Could he have advanced ſuch an apparent abſurdity, if the fact had not been true? He advanced it, becauſe he knew it to be true, tho he did not underſtand it. Juſt ſo he talked of ſeveral lords, who appeared to ABRAHAM under the forms of angels, without knowing what he ſaid, tho ABBADIE knew that the angel of the covenant was one of them: by which I profeſs myſelf not to know what ABBADIE meaned, or what they mean, who ſay, that this angel was the ſon of God. Thus a new rule is added to the canon of criticiſm by this learned divine.

ANOTHER condition of the authenticity of any human hiſtory, and ſuch alone we are to conſider in this place, is, that it contain nothing repugnant to the experience of mankind. Things repugnant to this experience are to be found in many, that paſs however for authentic; in that of LIVY, for inſtance: but then theſe incredible anecdotes ſtand by themſelves, as it were, and the hiſtory may go on without them. But this is not the caſe of the pentateuch, nor of the other books of the Old Teſtament. Incredible anecdotes are not mentioned ſeldom and occaſionally in them. The whole hiſtory is founded on ſuch, it conſiſts of little elſe, and if it were not an hiſtory of them, it would be an hiſtory of nothing. Theſe books become familiar to us before we have any experience of our own. The ſtrange ſtories they relate, repreſented in pictures or in prints, are the amuſements of our infancy; we read them, as ſoon as we learn to read, and they make

their impreſſions on us, like the tales of our nurſes. The latter are ſoon effaced, tho ſometimes, with difficulty; becauſe no one takes care to preſerve them, and care is taken, in a good education, to deſtroy them. But the others are induſtriouſly renewed, and the moſt ſuperſtitious credulity grows up along with us. We may laugh at Don QUIXOTTE, as long as we pleaſe, for reading romances till he believed them to be true hiſtories, and for quoting archbiſhop TURPIN with great ſolemnity; but when we ſpeak of the pentateuch, as of an authentic hiſtory, and quote MOSES, as ſolemnly as he did TURPIN, are we much leſs mad than he was? When I ſit down to read this hiſtory with the ſame indifference as I ſhould read any other, for ſo it ought to be read, to comply with all that archbiſhop TILLOTSON requires of us, I am ready to think myſelf tranſported into a ſort of fairy-land, where every thing is done by magic and enchantment; where a ſyſtem of nature, very different from ours, prevails; and all I meet with is repugnant to my experience, and to the cleareſt and moſt diſtinct ideas I have. Two or three incredible anecdotes, in a decade of LIVY, are eaſily paſſed over; I reject them, and I return, with my author, into the known courſe of human affairs, where I find many things extraordinary, but none incredible. I cannot do this in reading the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament. It is founded in incredibility. Almoſt every event contained in it is incredible in it's cauſes or conſequences, and I muſt accept or reject the whole, as I ſaid juſt now. I can do no otherwiſe, if I act like an indifferent judge, and if I give no more credit to MOSES than to any other hiſtorian. But I need ſay no more on this head. No one, except here and there a divine, will preſume to ſay, that the hiſtories of the Old Teſtament are conformable to the experience of mankind and to the natural courſe of things. I except here and there a divine, becauſe I remember one, who ſpeaking of the converſation of the ſerpent

with the firſt woman, and the other circumſtances of the fall of man, (that he may avoid the explanations given by the rabbins of this ſtory, or that of PHILO, a little leſs extravagant than the others, all which turned the whole into allegory) has the front to aſſert, that there is nothing incredible in this relation, literally underſtood.

THE next condition of hiſtorical authenticity is this, that the facts, the principal facts at leaſt, be confirmed by collateral teſtimony. By collateral teſtimony I mean the teſtimony of thoſe, who had no common intereſt of country, of religion, or of profeſſion, to diſguiſe or falſify the truth, as I expreſſed myſelf above. Thus too it is neceſſary that we expreſs ourſelves in order to prevent a common theological ſophiſm. HUETIUS ſays, in the place to which I have referred already, that an hiſtory is deemed to be true, when other hiſtories relate the ſame facts, and in the ſame manner. But it is not enough that the ſame facts are related, even in cotemporary, or nearly cotemporary books; ſince if the authors of theſe books were ſuch as I deſcribe, all theſe teſtimonies would be in effect but one, as all thoſe of the Old Teſtament, which confirm the moſaical hiſtory, are in truth but one, the teſtimony of MOSES himſelf.

JOSEPHUS attempts to ſupport this hiſtory by collateral teſtimonies, thoſe of Egyptians, Phoenicians, Chaldaeans, and even Greeks. But theſe teſtimonies, were they never ſo full to his purpoſe, would ceaſe to be collateral teſtimonies, by coming thro him who had a common intereſt of country and religion to diſguiſe and to falſify truth. If we examine the uſe he makes of the fragments he cites from MANETHO, concerning the ſhepherd-kings, and many other citations in his works, we ſhall find abundant reaſon to ſuſpect him of both. EUSEBIUS is a collateral witneſs, as little as he, and yet from theſe two quivers principally have all the arrows employed to defend

the authenticity of the Old Teſtament, been drawn. They are blunt indeed, and nothing can be more trifling than the uſe that has been made of them by antient and modern ſcholars. Whenever theſe men find, in profane hiſtory or tradition, the leaſt circumſtance that has any ſeeming relation to ſacred hiſtory, they produce it as collateral teſtimony, and ſometimes even the ſimilitude of ſounds is employed for the ſame purpoſe, with a great apparatus of learning. But nothing can be more impertinent than this learning. The man who gives the leaſt credit to the moſaic hiſtory for inſtance, will agree, very readily, that theſe five books contain traditions of a very great antiquity, ſome of which were preſerved and propagated by other nations, as well as by the Iſraelites, and by other hiſtorians, as well as by MOSES. Many of them may be true too; but, I think, they will not ſerve to vouch for one another in the manner they muſt do to become ſuch collateral teſtimonies as are required. That the Iſraelites had a leader and legiſlator called MOSES, is proved by the conſent of foreign, whom I call collateral, witneſſes. Be it ſo. But ſurely it will not follow, that this man converſed with the ſupreme Being face to face, which theſe collateral witneſſes do not affirm. The Iſraelites were an egyptian colony and conquered Paleſtine. Be it ſo. It will not follow, that the red-ſea opened a paſſage to them, and drowned the Egyptians who purſued them. It will not follow, that the poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan was promiſed to their father ABRAHAM four hundred years before, as a conſequence of the vocation of this patriarch, and of an alliance which God made with him and with his family. A great number of inſtances might be brought of the ſame kind; and ſuch inſtances might ſerve to prove the authenticity of thoſe hiſtories, which the monk of Viterbo endeavoured to impoſe on the world under the names of MEGASTHENES and other antient writers, juſt as well as they ſerve to prove the authen-

authenticity of thoſe which we aſcribe to MOSES, or JOSHUA, or any other ſuppoſed writers of the Old Teſtament.

THE three or four antient neighbouring nations, of whom we have ſome knowledge, ſeemed to have had a common fund of traditions, which they varied according to their different ſyſtems of religion, philoſophy, and policy. We may obſerve this, if we compare the traditions of the Arabs, deſcended from the Iſmaelites, with thoſe of the Jews, deſcended from the Iſraelites. Human tradition for human tradition, the former deſerve as much credit as the latter. Why then do we put ſo great a difference between them? Have we any reaſon for it, except the affirmation of one of the parties? ABBADIE will tell you that we have, becauſe the Jews were a people of ſages and philoſophers. The beſt excuſe, that can be made for the poor man, is to ſay, that he became, ſoon afterwards, mad enough to ſtudy the apocalypſe, and to believe that he found an hidden ſenſe in it. The truth is, that ignorance and ſuperſtition, pride, injuſtice, and barbarity were the peculiar characteriſtics of this people of ſages and philoſophers. The principles of their religion formed them to every part of this character. Their prieſts, who had the care of their religion and the keeping of their records, as we are told, maintained them in it; and whether their hiſtory was ſuch, as we ſee it, before the days of ESDRAS and NEHEMIAS, or nothing more than broken traditions, collected and put together by them in the preſent form, thus much is certain, that the ſame ſpirit breathes thro the whole, and that the character of the nation appears evidently in every part of the compoſition. It has been ſaid, I know, of the pride of this people particularly, that their ſcriptures were not contrived to flatter them in it, ſince their revolts, their apoſtacies, and the puniſhments which followed them, as well as the diſcourſes of their prophets,

filled with the moſt mortifying reproaches, and the moſt terrible threatenings on the part of God, are ſet forth in theſe books with every aggravating circumſtance. But this evaſion will ſtrengthen, inſtead of weakening, what I have ſaid. It is true that the Jews are often repreſented in them like rebellious children, but they are always repreſented like favorite children. They abandon God's law and his worſhip; they depoſe him; they chooſe another king in his place; ſtill his predilection for this choſen people ſubſiſts, and if he puniſhes, it is only, like an indulgent parent, to reclaim them, and to ſhew them the ſame favor as before. In ſhort, he renews all his promiſes to them; future glory and triumph; a Meſſiah; a kingdom that ſhall deſtroy all others, and laſt eternally, "conſumet uni-" verſa regna et ipſum ſtabit in eternum." Thus was the pride of this people kept up by incredible ſtories about the paſt, and incredible prophecies about the future; and with their pride, even to this day, their ignorance, their enthuſiaſtical ſuperſtition, and in principle, if not in effect for want of power, their injuſtice and their barbarity. Thus we ſee that the authenticity of the moſaical hiſtory and the other hiſtories of the Old Teſtament has no ſufficient collateral teſtimony, but reſts, ſolely, or principally, on the good faith of a people who deſerve, on many accounts, to be truſted the leaſt; and of whom we may ſay, that it is improbable their hiſtory ſhould have been written, and impoſſible that it ſhould have been preſerved, with a ſtrict regard to truth.

I MIGHT reſt the matter here, if it did not come into my thoughts to expoſe a ſophiſm that has been employed by thoſe who defend the authenticity of this hiſtory. If they cannot ſhew that it is confirmed by collateral and foreign teſtimony, cotemporary or nearly cotemporary, they hope to confirm it by aſſuming that relics continued long among the Jews, and

that feſtivals and ceremonious inſtitutions continue ſtill, all which are ſo many cotemporary proofs; ſince they muſt have been cotemporary, in their origin, with the facts to which they are relative. The proof is precarious, in the mouth of one of your divines, who have abuſed it to eſtabliſh ſo many pious frauds, and the belief of ſo many fooliſh legends; but it becomes contemptible, when it is employed by one of our divines, who declaim ſo much againſt the uſe that has been made of it in your church. With what face can he talk to us, like ABBADIE, of the rod of AARON, of the pot of manna, or of the figures that repreſented rats and the privy parts of the Philiſtines? Would the man prove his ſincerity to us, as he proves that of MOSES, by his contradictions and inconſiſtencies?

THE relics, ſo long preſerved, exiſt no where out of the books whoſe hiſtorical authenticity they are advanced to prove, and if they did exiſt, we ſhould be obliged to reject them, or to admit many of the groſſeſt impoſitions that have paſſed on popular credulity. Did not the prieſts of Delphi ſhew the very ſtone that SATURN ſwallowed, when he intended to devour JUPITER? Was there not an olive-tree at Troezena or ſomewhere in Greece, in the time of PAUSANIAS, which bloſſomed and bore fruit, which had been the club of HERCULES, and which this hero had planted, juſt as JOSEPH of Arimathaea planted his ſtick, that became a miraculous thorn at Glaſtonbury?—The inſtitution of feſtivals and ceremonies proves as little as relics. Tho ſuppoſed cotemporary, they may owe their original to ſome fabulous traditions; or if really cotemporary, they ſerve as well to prove all the ridiculous circumſtances, that have been blended with the tradition, in proceſs of time, as the fact which they were deſigned to record. The Iſraelites had their ſabbath of days, their ſabbath of years, and their weeks of years. Will it follow that God was employed

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ſix days in the laborious work of the creation, and that he reſted the ſeventh? The paſſover and other inſtitutions ſerved to commemorate the departure of the Iſraelites out of Egypt, and their tranſmigration into Paleſtine. But will they ſerve likewiſe to commemorate all the incredible circumſtances which had been added to the tradition of a very credible, and, no doubt, of a very true event? Collateral teſtimony proves the event; but theſe ſuppoſed cotemporary inſtitutions cannot ſtand in lieu of collateral teſtimony to prove the circumſtances. Whether the event be true, or whether it be falſe, ſuch inſtitutions will confound the truth of the event with the falſhood of the circumſtances in one caſe, and will vouch for both alike, in the other. The death of Moses, who certainly died, is confounded with the circumſtances that accompany it in the laſt chapter of Deuteronomy; circumſtances abſurd and profane; and yet, if the Jews commemorate the true fact, they muſt commemorate, on this principle, all the circumſtances that are related in the bible, and in their oral traditions. A good iman believes piouſly the aſcenſion of Mahomet, on the faith of his traditions, and of the ceremony, by which it is annually commemorated. The aſcenſion and the circumſtances of it are falſe alike, the ceremony vouches for all alike; and he muſt believe, not only the aſcenſion of Mahomet, but that the angel Gabriel brought, by night, to his ſepulchre a flying horſe, called Borak, which the prophet mounted and rode on horſeback into heaven. Shall the annual ceremony, which confirms the whole account alike, make us believe that Mahomet went to heaven, or hinder us from placing this ſtory in the ſame claſs with that of Astolphus and his hypogryphe? We ſhall believe no part of it; but the good iman is obliged to believe the whole.

The little I have ſaid makes it plain enough, and more particulars in ſo plain a caſe would be ſuperfluous, that if we take Tillotson at his word, if we give only the ſame credit to Moses, which we give to every other hiſtorian, and no more, his hiſtory cannot paſs, according to any rule of good ſenſe or true criticiſm for authentic. But other divines are not ſo generous; they give up nothing; and, therefore, when they cannot maintain weak arguments of one kind, they have recourſe to another hypotheſis, and affirm this hiſtory to have been writ by men under the immediate influence of divine inſpiration, and to be, therefore, of divine authority. For this they have the word of Josephus, and the unanimous atteſtation of the jewiſh and chriſtian churches. But all this will not amount to proof, unleſs it may be ſaid, that they who cannot give to this hiſtory even the appearance of human, can give it the appearance of divine authenticity. That ſameneſs of ſpirit, which runs thro all this hiſtory, and which appears in all the writings of the jewiſh prophets, confirms one thing that Josephus ſays. A diſtinct order of men, prieſts and prophets, among the Jews, as well as the Egyptians, publiſhed the ſacred writings of theſe people, and theſe writings were received on the faith of this order of men, who had the ſame temptations to impoſe, and the ſame opportunities of impoſing, in both countries. Josephus boaſts all the integrity of theſe men, and the ſtrict regard which they paid to truth, in Egypt, as well as in Paleſtine, and his teſtimony will be of as much weight, in favor of one, as in favor of the other, that is of none at all. The ſacred writings of the Egyptians had no more authority out of Egypt than the polytheiſm, ſuperſtition, and idolatry of other nations gave them; and the ſacred writings of the Jews were never received as ſuch, out of Judaea, till the propagation of chriſtianity carried them abroad. Chriſti-

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anity abrogated the law, and confirmed the hiſtory of MOSES, from the time, at leaſt, when St. PAUL undertook, like a true cabaliſtical architect, with the help of type and figure, to raiſe a new ſyſtem of religion on the old foundations.

NO proof of this kind, therefore, affording pretence to ſay, that the ſcriptures of the Iſraelites, any more than thoſe of the Egyptians, are of divine authority; our divines turn themſelves to declaim on certain undoubted marks of it, which are to be found, they aſſume, in the books themſelves that the canon of the Old Teſtament contains. Let us ſay ſomething on this ſubject. It deſerves our utmoſt attention. Let us compare ſome of theſe ſuppoſed marks of a divine original with thoſe of an human original, which will ſtare us in the face, and point out, plainly, the fraud and the impoſture. I uſe theſe words with great freedom. I think myſelf obliged, in conſcience, to do ſo, and before I conclude, you ſhall judge of the reaſons for which I think in this manner and hold this language.

WE are told, in ſome theological declamations, that the revelation made to the Iſraelites and taught in their ſcriptures, corrected the falſe ideas of paganiſm, as it appears by the examples of SOCRATES and PLATO, who borrowed, from the writings of the Jews, the beſt and ſoundeſt parts of their philoſophy, which has been proved over and over by learned antiquaries*. It is a ſufficient anſwer to this, to ſay, that the fact is falſe. Chriſtians, as well as Jews, have aſſerted it; but it is falſe to ſay, that they have proved it. Neither PLATO, nor SOCRATES, nor PYTHAGORAS, nor the Egyptians and Chaldaeans, their maſters, appear to have borrowed any thing from the Jews, tho MOSES had been inſtructed in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians, and tho the Jews, both before and after ESDRAS, borrowed evidently, as

* Vide ABBADIE.

as evidently as any ſuch thing can appear at this diſtance of time, from the Egyptians, the Chaldaeans, and even the greek philoſophers, from PLATO and from ZENO for inſtance. At other times we are told, that the ſoul of man knows neither whence it came nor whither it is to go, that theſe are points concerning which human reaſon muſt be always in doubt, and which were clearly determined by the jewiſh revelation. We find this aſſerted very magiſterially, but, if we have recourſe to the Bible, we find no ſuch thing. MOSES did not believe the immortality of the ſoul, nor the rewards and puniſhments of another life, tho it is poſſible he might have learned theſe doctrines from the Egyptians, who taught them very early, and yet not ſo early, perhaps, as they taught that of the unity of God. When I ſay that MOSES did not believe the immortality of the ſoul, nor future rewards and puniſhments, my reaſon for it is, that he taught neither, when he had to do with a people, whom even a theocracy could not reſtrain, and on whom, therefore, terrors of puniſhment future as well as preſent, eternal as well as temporary, could never be too much multiplied, nor too ſtrongly inculcated. MOSES, the greateſt of their prophets, knew nothing of this immortality, and SOLOMON, the wiſeſt of their kings, decides againſt it. The texts in EZEKIEL, and others, which are alledged to prove that this doctrine was part of the jewiſh ſyſtem, are too modern to prove it, and they admit, beſides, of a different ſenſe. In ſhort, this doctrine does not appear to have prevailed amongſt them, till they became acquainted with greek philoſophy, and inſtead of lending to PLATO borrowed from him. This pretended mark of divinity may be aſcribed therefore, if it be one, to pagan philoſophy, but it cannot be ſo to jewiſh theology; and, I cannot help uſing an expreſſion of one of theſe declaimers*, who write as if they were preaching,

* ABBADIE.

and to apply it to the whole tribe. They would do well to think a little better beforehand, and to reſpect their readers a little more.

When theſe men talk of the characters of a divine original, which are to be found in the books of the Old Teſtament, They muſt mean nothing, or they muſt mean to ſay, that theſe books are more perfect, according to our ideas of human perfection, whether we conſider them as books of law or of hiſtory, than any other writings that are avowedly human. Now if this be what they mean, nothing can be more falſe. They cannot deny that pagan philoſophers enjoined a general benevolence, a benevolence not confined to any particular ſociety of men, but extended to the great commonwealth of mankind, as a firſt principle of the law of our nature. The law of the Jews exacted from them all the duties neceſſary to maintain peace and good order among themſelves, and if this be a mark of divinity, the laws, which rapparees and banditti eſtabliſh in their ſocieties, have the ſame. But the firſt principles, and the whole tenor of the jewiſh laws, took them out of all moral obligations to the reſt of mankind, and if Moses did not order them to have no benevolence for any, who were not Jews, "erga nullum hominem benevolos eſſe," as Lysimachus pretended, yet is it certain, that their law, their hiſtory, and their prophecies, determined them to think themſelves a choſen race, diſtinct from the reſt of mankind in the order of God's providence, and that they were far from owing to other men, what other men owed to them and to one another. This produced a legal injuſtice and cruelty in their whole conduct, and there is no part of their hiſtory wherein we ſhall not find examples of both, authoriſed by their law, and preſſed upon them by their prieſts and their prophets.

In the ſyſtems of pagan philoſophy we are exhorted, ſays another of theſe declaimers, to love virtue for her own ſake; but the jewiſh divines, riſing much higher, exhorted us to love virtue for the ſake of God. But can there be any thing ſo impiouſly intereſted and craving, as the ſentiments aſcribed to the patriarchs by Moses, and the principles of his own law? "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that "I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, "ſo that I come again to my father's houſe in peace, than "ſhall the Lord be my God, and this ſtone which I have ſet "for a pillar ſhall be God's houſe, and of all that thou ſhalt "give me, I will ſurely give the tenth unto thee.*" This was Jacob's vow, and the conditional engagement which he took with God. If we turn to the xxviiith chapter of Deuteronomy, we ſhall find that Moses, on the renewal of the covenant between God and the people, employs no arguments, to induce the latter to a ſtrict obſervation of it, of an higher nature than promiſes of immediate good, and threatenings of immediate evil. They are exhorted to keep the law; not for the ſake of the law, not for the ſake of God, but for conſiderations of another kind, and wherein not only their wants were to be ſupplied, but all their appetites and paſſions to be gratified. If they hearkened diligently to the voice of the Lord, they were to be ſet on high above all the nations of the earth; they were to be the head, and not the tail; to be above only and not beneath; all the people of the earth were to fear them; all their enemies were to be ſmitten before their face, and they who came out againſt them, one way, were to fly before them ſeven. Theſe were objects of ambition. Their baſket and their ſtore were to be bleſſed, they were to grow rich, they were to lend to many nations, and to borrow from none. Theſe were

* Gen. vi. 28.

objects of avarice. They were to be bleſſed every where, in the city and in the field, in the fruit of their bodies, in the fruit of their ground, and in the fruit of their cattle, and of their flocks of ſheep. Theſe were objects of all their other appetites and paſſions. God purchaſed, as it were, the obedience of a people, he had choſen long before, by this mercenary bargain. It was ill kept on their part; and the law, with all theſe ſanctions, was continually violated, ſometimes rejected, and had in no degree a force ſufficient to maintain itſelf in obſervation and reverence.

The moſt excellent conſtitutions of human government and ſyſtems of human law become often uſeleſs, and even hurtful, either in a natural courſe of things, or by extraordinary conjunctures, which the wiſdom of legiſlators could not foreſee. One of the moſt conceivable perfections of a law is, that it be made with ſuch a foreſight of all poſſible accidents, and with ſuch proviſions for the due execution of it, in all caſes, that the law may be effectual to govern and direct theſe accidents, inſtead of lying at the mercy of them. Such a law would produce its effect, by a certain moral neceſſity reſulting from itſelf, and not by the help of any particular conjuncture. We are able to form ſome general notions of laws thus perfect; but to make them is above humanity. Another of the moſt conceivable perfections of a law conſiſts in the clearneſs and preciſion of it's terms, and, even in this, the greateſt legiſlators have often failed. The terms become equivocal or obſcure, if they were not ſo originally, by the endeavours of thoſe who fear the law, to elude it, and of thoſe who get by their explanations or judgments, to perplex the meaning of it. But that which is ideal perfection not real among men, will be found, no doubt, and ought to be expected, when God is the legiſlator. If it is not ſo found, all that can be

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ſaid about marks of divinity in any law, that pretends to be revealed and enacted by God, is mere cant.

To apply theſe reflections the more ſtrongly, it will be proper to conſider the law of Moses, relatively to the firſt of the perfections mentioned, as a law given to the Iſraelites alone, and to conſider, relatively to the ſecond, the whole body of their law, and their hiſtory, which is a ſort of commentary on their law, not only as given to them, but as given to all mankind, for purpoſes the moſt important to their common welfare. If eternal Wiſdom dictated the laws and inſpired theſe hiſtorians and prophets, in all their writings, eternal wiſdom knew all the uſes they were to ſerve in time; and by conſequence, whether we regard the jewiſh oeconomy alone, or that of judaiſm and chriſtianity together, the whole ſyſtem of law, hiſtory, and propheey, muſt be exactly proportioned, as the means to all theſe ends.

On the firſt head we cannot read the Bible without being convinced, that no law ever operated ſo weak and ſo uncertain an effect, as the law of Moses did. Far from prevailing againſt accidents and conjunctures, the leaſt was ſufficient to interrupt the courſe and to defeat the deſigns of it; to make that people not only neglect the law, but ceaſe to acknowledge the legiſlator. To prevent this, was the firſt of theſe deſigns, and if the ſecond was, as it was no doubt, and as it is the deſign or pretence of all laws, to ſecure the happineſs of the people, this deſign was defeated, as fully as the other; for the whole hiſtory of this people is one continued ſeries of infractions of the law and of national calamities. So that this law, conſidered as the particular law of this nation, has proved more ineffectual than any other law, perhaps, that can be quoted. If this be aſcribed to the hardneſs of heart and

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obſtinacy of the people, in order to ſave the honor of the law, this honor will be little ſaved, and it's divinity ill maintained. This excuſe might be admitted in the caſe of any human law; but we ſpeak here of a law ſuppoſed to be dictated by divine wiſdom, which ought, and which would have been able, if it had been ſuch, to keep in a ſtate of ſubmiſſion to it, and of national proſperity, even a people rebellious and obſtinate enough to break thro any other. If it be ſaid, that the law became ineffectual by the fault of thoſe who governed the people, their judges and their kings, let it be remembered that theſe judges and kings were of God's appointment, for the moſt part at leaſt; that he himſelf is ſaid to have been their king, during ſeveral ages; that his preſence remained amongſt them, even after they had depoſed him; and that the high-prieſt conſulted him, on any emergency, by the Urim and Thummim. Occaſional miracles were wrought to enforce the law, but this was a ſtanding miracle that might ſerve both to explain and enforce it, by the wiſdom and authority of the legiſlator, as often as immediate recourſe to him was neceſſary. Can it be denied, that the moſt imperfect ſyſtem of human laws would have been rendered effectual by ſuch means as theſe?

It may not be amiſs here to compare the effect of this law, before the captivity of Babylon, with that which it had afterwards.—Ten tribes of this choſen people had been, for their diſobedience, diſperſed, and, we may ſay, loſt in the eaſt, long before the reign of Nebuchodonosor. This prince completed the ruin of the whole nation. He burned their temple, and their city, and carried the two remaining tribes into captivity. This captivity is ſaid to have laſted but ſeventy years, and the Jews had carried into it ſo little reſpect for their law, ſo little regard to their hiſtory, and ſo little truſt in the pro-

prophecies, which had been publiſhed both before and during this time, that they ſeemed to have forgot them all when CYRUS gave them permiſſion to return to their country, and to rebuild their temple. He did more than give them permiſſion; he gave them encouragement, and, among other inſtances of it, he reſtored the ſacred veſſels, which had been taken from them. What happened on this great revolution? ZOROBABEL gathered, with much trouble, a ſmall number of the Jews, who were willing to return into their own country on this great revolution, and even theſe were the dregs of the people. The moſt conſiderable of them, and, among theſe, twenty of the four and twenty orders of prieſts that had been carried to Babylon, choſe rather to ſtay there than to return to the holy city, tho that was the place appointed by God for their ſacrifices, and the moſt auguſt ceremonies of their religion. Fourſcore years intervened between the return of ZOROBABEL and the arrival of ESDRAS at Jeruſalem. The temple and the city, probably, had been rebuilt, but the law cannot be ſaid to have been reſtored. Many things, directly contrary to it, were practiſed openly and without ſcruple. Thus, for example, not only the people, but the Levites and the prieſts, married ſtrange women, women who were not of their own country. ESDRAS, and NEHEMIAS after him, neglected nothing to reſtore and preſerve the obſervation of the law, and for this purpoſe they took means very different from thoſe which MOSES had inſtituted, and much more effectual. One of theſe means, and perhaps the moſt effectual, was the inſtitution of ſynagogues, which became ſo numerous, that wherever there were ten Jews, it is ſaid, there was a ſynagogue. In theſe the law was read and explained once every week; whereas it was to be read but once in ſeven years, and the people were obliged to go up to Jeruſalem to hear it, according to the moſaic inſtitution. The conſequence was, that,

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notwithſtanding ſome ſchiſms, ſome apoſtacies, and other revolutions, which happened in the church and ſtate, the Jews, in general, ſignaliſed themſelves by a greater and more conſtant attachment to their religion and law.

Another perfection of law conſiſts in the clearneſs and preciſion of the terms; and, in theſe reſpects, we propoſe to conſider this body of hiſtory, of prophecy, and of law, relatively not to the Jews alone, but to the reſt of the world likewiſe. Now the language in which this law was given, and in which we muſt ſuppoſe that the hiſtories and prophecies were written, as well as the law, unleſs we ſuppoſe theſe to have been written in, or after the time of Esdras, is, the learned ſay, of all languages the moſt looſe and equivocal; and the ſtyle and manner of writing of the ſacred authors, whoever they were, or whenever they lived, increaſe the uncertainty and obſcurity even of any other language. How ſhould it be otherwiſe, when the ſame paſſages may be taken in hiſtorical, myſtical, literal, and allegorical, ſenſes, and when thoſe who writ them, knew ſo little what they writ, that they foretold ſome future, when they imagined they were relating ſome paſt, event? Lord Bacon, indeed, ſays, that the ſacred authors had a ſpecial privilege of recording the future, as well as the paſt, in hiſtory. But I ſuppoſe his lordſhip to have been no more in earneſt when he ſaid this, than he was in writing his chriſtian paradoxes. To ſupply theſe defects, the Jews have recourſe to an oral law, and chriſtians to the deciſions of councils. Strange methods indeed! hiſtory may explain or controul tradition but it is quite abſurd to explain or controul hiſtory, by tradition. Councils were compoſed of men, whoſe pretenſions to inſpiration deſerve nothing but our contempt, and, therefore, it is equally abſurd to explain or controul the word of God, by the judgment of

theſe men, whether in their aſſemblies, or ſeparately. St. Jerom complains, in one of his letters,* that they dragged the text to favor their particular ſentiments, how repugnant ſoever to it. But this text does not ſeem to want ſo much draging. The ambiguity of it makes it ſupple enough, and ſentiments, the moſt contrary to one another, are equally well ſupported by it. If we add to theſe conſiderations that of the infinite number of copies, of verſions, and of verſions of verſions, which have given occaſion to many alterations and interpolations, that are to be found, without going to Spinoza, to Hobbes, or to the fanciful author of the pre-adamitical ſyſtem, we muſt be, I think, convinced, that the Bible, which we call the word of God, is as little fit, by the manner in which it has been preſerved, to be an uniform foundation of univerſal religion, as by the manner in which it was writ and firſt publiſhed to the world.

Divines have their anſwer ready, and I hear, methinks, a great biſhop of your church aſk me, with that air of ſuperiority, to which no man of his age had a better claim, whether the authenticity of theſe books diminiſhes, becauſe ſome explanatory additions may have been inſerted, becauſe ſome errors may have ſlipped by accident into the text, or becauſe the miſtakes of copiſts have given occaſion to various readings? Shew me, ſays the right reverend perſon, if you can, any law, any doctrine, any ceremony, any miracle, or any propheſy, that has been added! Are not all the writings of the profane authors, whom you deem authentic, come down to you in the ſame manner as thoſe of the holy penmen? I reply, my objection and my complaint are, that the manner in which theſe books were writ, were publiſhed, and have been preſerved, make it impoſſible to do this. Could we do it, could we

* Ad Paul.

we diſtinguiſh between what is original and what not, the objection would vaniſh and the complaint ceaſe. But both will remain in force till then; becauſe of the vaſt difference that there is between the importance of theſe and of all other writings. The laws of PLATO, the odes of HORACE, and the hiſtory of LIVY, may have been corrupted without any ill conſequence to thoſe who read them. But the ſame cannot be ſaid of the laws of MOSES, of the pſalms of DAVID, and of the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament.

I HAVE been long enough on the defenſive. It is time I ſhould attack in my turn, and ſhew you for what reaſons I cannot believe that the pentateuch, and the other books of the Old Teſtament, were writ under a divine influence, and have any right to be called the word of God. There may be ſome defects in human laws, ſome falſities or miſtakes in human hiſtories, and yet both of them may deſerve all the reſpect and all the credit, on the whole, that the writings of fallible men can deſerve. But any one defect, any one falſity, or miſtake, is ſufficient to ſhew the fraud and impoſture of writings that pretend to contain the infallible word of God. Now there are groſs defects, and palpable falſhoods, in almoſt every page of the ſcriptures, and the whole tenor of them is ſuch as no man, who acknowledges a ſupreme, all-perfect Being, can believe it to be his word. This I muſt prove; and when I have done ſo, divines may call me theiſt, or atheiſt, if they pleaſe. I ſhall not be aſhamed of the firſt character, and ſhall leave them to purge themſelves of one as abſurd as the laſt.—That the Jews held the unity of God is true, and that their father ABRAHAM might have learned this doctrine among the Egyptians, tho it has been ſaid, very fooliſhly, that he acquired great wealth by inſtructing that people in philoſophy and the other ſciences, is true likewiſe;

wiſe; but it will not follow that he, or his poſterity, adored the true God. There are many paſſages in Job, in Iſaiah, in the Pſalms, and in other parts of the Old Teſtament, which give moſt ſublime ideas of the majeſty of the ſupreme Being, and which have been founded, for that reaſon, very high. But it will not be hard to quote mahometan, and even pagan writers, who have ſpoke of him with as much nobleneſs of ſtyle, and with as much dignity, as any of theſe; whilſt, on the other hand, it will be eaſy to quote many things, imputed to the ſupreme Being by theſe, at leaſt as unworthy of him, as any which the mahometans, or even the moſt extravagant of the pagans, invented. Sublime expreſſions, concerning the Deity, may ſerve to ſhew, that the imaginations of thoſe who uſed them, were heated by the enthuſiaſm of poetry and devotion; they will not prove the writers to have been divinely inſpired; and it will become nothing leſs than blaſphemy to aſſert that they were ſo, when they impute, at the ſame time, ſuch things to the Divinity as would bring diſgrace on humanity.

I KNOW, for I can demonſtrate by connecting the cleareſt and moſt diſtinct of my real ideas, that there is a God, a firſt intelligent Cauſe of all things, whoſe infinite wiſdom and power appear evidently in all his works, and to whom, therefore, I aſcribe, moſt rationally, every other perfection, whether conceivable or not conceivable by me. A book is put into my hands, which is, I am told, and have been told from my youth, the word of this God, and wherein I ſhall find the whole ſcheme of things which he has eſtabliſhed, and the whole oeconomy of his providence. What I learned before by rote, I conſider with more attention, and am far from finding in it the ſupreme Being, whoſe exiſtence and attributes I demonſtrate. The ſcene opens, indeed, by the creation,

and this creation is aſcribed to one God; that of the material world, at leaſt: for when this God proceeds to the creation of man, he calls on other Beings, we know not by the text how many, to co-operate with him, and to make man in his and their likeneſs. This ſeems to lay a foundation for polytheiſm, and I am ſtartled at it, becauſe it is inconſiſtent with that unity of the Godhead which my reaſon ſhews me, and which the general tenor even of the moſaic law and hiſtory aſſerts. The divine, on the contrary, triumphs in the paſſage; becauſe he drags it, againſt reaſon and this revelation both, to ſignify the three co-equal Perſons in one Godhead, which no reaſon can comprehend, which no revelation affirms explicitly, and which has no foundation, except that of a theology much more modern than this.

The more I compare what Moses ſays of this God, and by a ſuppoſed inſpiration from him, the more repugnant I find the whole to be demonſtrated, and even to obvious truth. Nothing can better reſemble modern rabinical traditions, than theſe antient and moſaical traditions: the ſame ignorance of nature, phyſical and moral, the ſame irreverent conceptions of the ſupreme Being prevails in both. Moses, they ſay, was divinely inſpired, and yet Moses was as ignorant of the true ſyſtem of the univerſe, as any of the people of his age. I need not deſcend into particulars to ſhew this ignorance. To evade the objection drawn from it, we are told that he conformed himſelf to that of the people. He did not write to inſtruct the Iſraelites in natural philoſophy, but to imprint ſtrongly on their minds a belief of one God, the Creator of all things. Was it neceſſary to that purpoſe that he ſhould explain to them the copernican ſyſtem? No moſt certainly. But it was not neceſſary to this purpoſe, neither, that he ſhould give them an abſurd account, ſince he thought fit to give

give them one, of the creation of our phyſical, and we may ſay, of our moral ſyſtem. It was not neceſſary he ſhould tell them, for inſtance, that light was created, and the diſtinction of night and day, of evening and morning, were made before the ſun, the moon, and the ſtars, which were "ſet in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night, and to "be for ſigns and for ſeaſons, and for days and for years." It was not neceſſary that he ſhould tell them, how this moral ſyſtem was deſtroyed, by the wiles of a ſerpent, and by the eating of an apple, almoſt as ſoon as it began, againſt the intention, as well as command, of the Creator. Beſides Moses muſt be conſidered as appointed, and inſpired by God, to write, not only for his own age, but for all future ages; for the moſt enlightened as well as for the moſt ignorant: in which caſe, that his hiſtory might anſwer all the deſigns of eternal wiſdom, it ſhould have been proportioned to the ignorance of the Iſraelites, as little able to underſtand one ſyſtem of philoſophy as another, without giving ſo much reaſon to people, better informed, to believe him as ignorant as any uninſpired perſon could be.

If the ignorance and the errors, which betray themſelves very groſsly in the writings aſcribed to Moses, make it impoſſible to believe ſuch an author divinely inſpired, the confuſed, inconſiſtent, and unworthy notions of a ſupreme Being, which appear in his writings, ſhew very evidently, that the true God was unknown to him. He acknowledged but one God, and the people were forbid to worſhip any other. But then he puts this one God to as many and as unworthy uſes, in the ſervice of man, as the heathens put their many gods, of different orders, and he was, therefore, in this reſpect more inconſiſtent than they were. The God of Moses creates the world, makes man, and repents of it immediately, for a reaſon which he might have prevented by a little leſs indulgence to,

what is called, free will. As ſoon as this indulgence had given an opportunity to the ſerpent to tempt EVE, and to EVE to tempt ADAM, who ſhould have known the nature of ſerpents better, ſince he had juſt given to all animals the names that were proper to them; in ſhort, as ſoon as they had eat the forbidden apple, and were fallen, they heard the voice of God, who was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. He condemned them for their diſobedience; he curſed the earth, for their ſakes, and the ſerpent above all other beaſts. Their eyes were then opened, they knew that they were naked, and they made themſelves aprons of fig-leaves, which ſerved to cover their nudity, till God made them coats of ſkins, for that purpoſe, and then drove them out of paradiſe. Thus death and ſin entered into the world, and the crime of this unhappy pair was puniſhed in their whole poſterity. This ſtrange ſtory, ſo trifling and ſo ſerious, and wherein God is made a principal actor with the ſerpent and ADAM and EVE, has given occaſion to much ſilly pains that have been taken both by Jews, and Chriſtians, to leſſen the abſurdity of it, if that were poſſible. Since it is impoſſible, ſome have attempted to explain the whole allegorically, and it may not ſeem improbable that this allegory had been invented, among other egyptian myſteries, to ſignify the introduction of phyſical and moral evil into the world, by the fault of man, and againſt the deſign of God. This however cannot be admitted by Chriſtians; for if it was, what would become of that famous text whereon the doctrine of our redemption is founded? The whole therefore muſt be underſtood literally, and in that caſe the God who made the world and man, that is the ſupreme Being, is the ſame God who walks in the garden, to enjoy the cool of the evening, who tries this famous cauſe, and inſults our firſt parents by irony and ſarcaſm.

THUS

THUS again, and to ſhew in another inſtance what inconſiſtency, as well as abſurdity, MOSES imputed to his one God, let us obſerve, that he makes this God repent a ſecond time that he had made man on the earth, becauſe "he alſo was "fleſh, every imagination of his heart was evil, and all fleſh "had corrupted his way." For this reaſon he reſolved to drown the whole world, and every living creature in it, except one man, called NOAH, his family, and as many birds, and beaſts, and creeping things as were neceſſary to repleniſh the earth. This reſolution taken, the God of MOSES orders NOAH to build an ark, or clumſy cheſt, in the faſhion and in the proportions he preſcribes very minutely. This done, he crowds all the living creatures, he intended to ſave, men, and birds, and beaſts, and inſects, into the ark; tho great ſcholars pretend to ſhew, by a fair calculation, that far from being crowded, there was ample room for them all in it. As ſoon as they were in, God ſhut the door upon them, the deluge began, and had it's full effect. When it was over, and as ſoon as God ſmelled the ſweet ſavor of a burnt-offering, on the altar NOAH had erected, he repented again, and reſolved not to curſe the ground any more for man's ſake, nor for a reaſon, which ſhould have hindered him from doing it at all, tho he had done it twice already. He eſtabliſhed a covenant with NOAH, with his ſons, and with their poſterity, and that he might remember this covenant, between him and the earth, or every living creature upon the earth, which he had promiſed to drown no more, he declares to them the inſtitution of a rain-bow, deſigned to put him in mind of his promiſe, whenever he ſhould bring a cloud over the earth.

ABRAHAM deſcended from NOAH by SEM, and God made a new covenant with him and his poſterity. The ſupreme Being con-

condeſcended to be the tutelary God of ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB, and under this character he acted a part which a ſenſible heathen, not tranſported by preſumptuous notions of his own importance, nor by the impudence of enthuſiaſm, would have thought too mean and too low for any of his inferior gods or daemons. The whole hiſtory, from NOAH to ABRAHAM, and from ABRAHAM to the Exode, is a ſeries of tales that would appear fit to amuſe children alone, if they were found in any other book, tho they ſerved two great purpoſes of pride and ambition among an ignorant and barbarous people. They ſerved to give JACOB the preference, over a much better man, over his brother ESAU. He acquired indeed this birth-right, and the prior bleſſing of a doating father, by a moſt infamous fraud; but the fraud was ſufficient, even in the eye of God, to give the deſcendants of the younger brother, the Iſraelities, an entire preference over the deſcendants of the elder brother, the Edomites, and to ſet the former in the place of his favorite people. The ſame tales ſerved the ambition, as well as the pride of the former, who claimed on their authority, as the legitimate offſpring of ABRAHAM, a right to the land of Canaan, which God had given to ABRAHAM, and to all the glorious promiſes, which he had made to that patriarch. The other nations of the earth were plunged in idolatry; God left them in it; he neglected them, and thought it enough to preſerve the knowledge of himſelf, and the purity of his worſhip, in Paleſtine: for which purpoſe he gave a particular law, as well as the country of the Canaanites, to the Iſraelites. If we conſider his laws, as means of preſerving monotheiſm, and the purity of worſhip, in oppoſition to polytheiſm and ſuperſtition, we ſhall find that no means could be worſe proportioned to this end. If we conſider the manner in which this people was conducted, by God himſelf, out of Egypt into the promiſed land; how they acquired the poſſeſ-

poſſeſſion of it, by his immediate aſſiſtance, and by the execution of his orders, ſignified to their leaders; we ſhall find, that nothing can be conceived more unworthy of an all-perfect Being. In order to preſerve the purity of his worſhip, he preſcribes to them a multitude of rites and ceremonies, founded in the ſuperſtitions of Egypt, from which they were to be weaned, or in ſome analogy to them. He ſucceeded accordingly. They were never weaned entirely from all theſe ſuperſtitions, and the great merit of the law of MOSES was teaching the people to adore one God, much as the idolatrous nations adored ſeveral. This may be called ſanctifying pagan rites and ceremonies, in theological language; but it is profaning the pure worſhip of God, in the language of common ſenſe.—In order to make good his grant to ABRAHAM of the land of Canaan, he orders the poſterity of this patriarch to conquer it, and to exterminate the inhabitants. Juſt ſo the leaders of Huns, of Goths, and Vandals, might, and did make good their promiſes with the people who followed them. Juſt ſo the Spaniards made good the decree of ALEXANDER the ſixth, when they conquered America. PIZARRO was not more cruel than JOSHUA, nor the franciſcan monk, who accompanied him in his expedition againſt ATAHUALPA, ſo cruel as SAMUEL, who ſpoke in the name of the Lord. The franciſcan monk excited the ſoldiers to kill the king of Peru in the heat of battle. The jewiſh prieſt hewed the king of the Amalekites "to "pieces before the Lord," in cool blood, and SAUL was depoſed for the clemency he had ſhewed, tho he too had exerciſed cruelty enough to ſate any human ferocity.

I AM not ignorant of the arbitrary aſſumptions, and ſilly evaſions, which are employed to ſoften and excuſe ſuch acts of cruelty, by antient fathers, and modern commentators. You may remember, that we read together, not long ago, the an-

ſwer which CYRIL of Alexandria writ to the emperor JULIAN, after the death of this emperor. When we laid aſide the Billinſgate, and the long recriminations, by which if he could not defend MOSES, he tried to revenge himſelf on PLATO, we found little, or nothing, in it that deſerved attention, except for it's abſurdity; for abſurdity deſerves ſome attention to warn us againſt it. The men who juſtify ſuch cruelties, as I have mentioned, and many others, which might be cited from the Old Teſtament, upon any hypotheſis whatever, muſt have very ill hearts as well as heads, and he, who imputes them to the ſupreme Being, is worſe than an atheiſt, tho he paſs for a ſaint.

IT is very unneceſſary, in writing to you, that I ſhould dwell upon the ſtale, theological artifices that are employed to get over ſuch objections as have been raiſed againſt the books of MOSES, and the other books of the Old Teſtament. The moſt abſurd things they contain are called, ſometimes, types and figures, tho they have no more relation to the things ſaid to be typified and ſignified by them, than to any thing that paſſes now in France. Others of the ſame kind are called allegories, and are explained, not by the book wherein they are found, but by ſome fanciful commentary on them. Sometimes the order of allegory is inverted, and things, plain in themſelves, are aſſumed to be allegories, in order to eſtabliſh, upon them, ſuch doctrines as ſuit theological hypotheſes; many examples of which may be found in the writings of St. PAUL. But the great expedient they employ after him likewiſe, is that of myſtery; when things, that ſtand in flat contradiction to the divine attributes, and that can be neither diſguiſed by allegory, nor ſoftened by analogy, are urged againſt them. When a theiſt ſees nothing repugnant to the wiſdom and power, or any other attributes of a ſupreme, all-perfect Being,

in the works of God, and therefore thinks himſelf juſtified in rejecting the impiety of thoſe who would impoſe on him, as the word of God, a book which contains ſcarce any thing that is not ſo, the divine has recourſe to exclamation. Reſtrain your profane temerity, he cries. The wiſdom of God is not like the wiſdom of man, nor the juſtice of God like the juſtice of man, and who art thou, O man! who preſumeſt to ſound the depths of either? There is ſomething ſo impudent, as well as abſurd in this proceeding, that common as it is, one can ſee no example of it without ſurpriſe; for what can any man mean, who inſiſts that I ſhould receive theſe books, as the word of God, on account of the evident marks of a divine original, which he pretends to ſhew me in them, and then ſtops me in this examination, by aſſuming the very thing that is in queſtion? There are many appearances, no doubt, in the phyſical and moral ſyſtems which may paſs for myſteries, becauſe we cannot fully comprehend them; but there is nothing in either of theſe, repugnant to any excellency which we ought to attribute to the ſupreme Being. We confeſs our ignorance, but we do not therefore call in queſtion the divine attributes, nor diſbelieve theſe ſyſtems to be his work, nor the law of nature to be his law. Had we the ſame certainty that the jewiſh ſcriptures were his word, we might reaſon in the ſame manner about them. But we cannot believe them to be his word, tho we know that the phyſical and moral ſyſtems are his work, whilſt we find in them ſuch repugnancies to the nature of an all-perfect Being; not myſteries, but abſurdities, not things incomprehenſible, but things that imply, manifeſtly, contradiction with his nature. They imply it ſo ſtrongly, that if we believe in Moses and his God, we cannot believe in that God, whom our reaſon ſhews us; nay, we muſt believe againſt knowledge, and oppoſe the authority of jewiſh traditions to demonſtration.

HERE will I conclude, having ſaid enough, I think, to ſhew that the beginning of the world is ſufficiently proved, by the univerſality of tradition; that the teſtimony of MOSES cannot be reputed an hiſtorical teſtimony, if we give no more credit to him than we ſhould give to any other hiſtorian; and that we cannot admit his teſtimony, for divine, without abſurdity and blaſphemy.

LETTERS

OR

ESSAYS

ADDRESSED TO

ALEXANDER POPE, Esq;

LETTERS or ESSAYS

ADDRESSED TO

ALEXANDER POPE, Eſq;

The INTRODUCTION.

DEAR SIR,

SINCE you have begun, at my requeſt, the work which I have wiſhed long that you would undertake, it is but reaſonable that I ſubmit to the taſk you impoſe upon me. Mere compliance with any thing you deſire, is a pleaſure to me. On the preſent occaſion, however, this compliance is a little intereſted; and that I may not aſſume more merit with you, than I really have, I will own that in performing this act of friendſhip, for ſuch you are willing to eſteem it, the purity of my motive is corrupted by ſome regard to my private utility. In ſhort, I ſuſpect you to be guilty of a very friendly fraud, and to mean my ſervice, whilſt you ſeem to mean your own.

IN leading me to diſcourſe, as you have done often, and in preſſing me to write as you do now, on certain ſubjects, you may propoſe to draw me back to thoſe trains of thought,

which are, above all others, worthy to employ the human mind, and I thank you for it. They have been often interrupted by the buſineſs and diſſipations of the world, but they were never ſo more grievouſly to me, nor leſs uſefully to the public, than ſince royal ſeduction prevailed on me to abandon the quiet and leiſure of the retreat I had choſen abroad, and to neglect the example of RUTILIUS, for I might have imitated him in this at leaſt, who fled further from his country when he was invited home.

YOU have begun your ethic epiſtles in a maſterly manner. You have copied no other writer, nor will you, I think, be copied by any one. It is with genius as it is with beauty; there are a thouſand pretty things that charm alike; but ſuperior genius, like ſuperior beauty, has always ſomething particular, ſomething that belongs to itſelf alone. It is always diſtinguiſhable, not only from thoſe who have no claim to excellence, but even from thoſe who excel, when any ſuch there are.

I AM pleaſed, you may be ſure, to find your ſatire turn in the very beginning of theſe epiſtles, againſt the principal cauſe, for ſuch you know that I think it, of all the errors, all the contradictions, and all the diſputes which have ariſen among thoſe who impoſe themſelves on their fellow creatures for great maſters, and almoſt ſole proprietors of a gift of God, which is common to the whole ſpecies. This gift is reaſon, a faculty, or rather an aggregate of faculties, that is beſtowed, in different degrees, and not in the higheſt certainly, on thoſe who make the higheſt pretenſions to it. Let your ſatire chaſtiſe, and if it be poſſible, humble that pride, which is the fruitful parent of their vain curioſity, and bold preſumption; which renders them dogmatical in the midſt of ignorance, and often ſceptical

in the midſt of knowledge. The man who is puffed up with this philoſophical pride, whether divine, or theiſt, or atheiſt, deſerves no more to be reſpected, than one of thoſe trifling creatures, who are conſcious of little elſe than their animality, and who ſtop as far ſhort of the attainable perfections of their nature, as the other attempts to go beyond them. You will diſcover as many ſilly affections, as much foppery and futility, as much inconſiſtency and low artifice, in one as in the other. I never met the madwoman at Brentford, decked out in old and new rags, and nice and fantaſtical in the manner of wearing them, without reflecting on many of the profound ſcholars, and ſublime philoſophers of our own, and of former ages.

You may expect ſome contradiction, and ſome obloquy on the part of theſe men, tho you will have leſs to apprehend from their malice and reſentment, than a writer in proſe on the ſame ſubjects would have. You will be ſafer in the generalities of poetry, and I know your precaution enough to know, that you will ſcreen yourſelf in them againſt any direct charge of heterodoxy. But the great clamor of all will be raiſed when you deſcend lower, and let your muſe looſe among the herd of mankind. Then will thoſe powers of dullneſs, whom you have ridiculed into immortality, be called forth in one united phalanx againſt you. But why do I talk of what may happen? You have experienced lately ſomething more than I prognoſticate. Fools and knaves ſhould be modeſt at leaſt, they ſhould aſk quarter of men of ſenſe and virtue; and ſo they do till they grow up to a majority; till a ſimilitude of character aſſures them of the protection of the great. But then vice and folly, ſuch as prevail in our country, corrupt our manners, deform even ſocial life, and contribute to make us ridiculous as well as miſerable, will

claim reſpect for the ſake of the vicious and the fooliſh. It will be then no longer ſufficient to ſpare perſons; for to draw even characters of imagination muſt become criminal, when the application of them to thoſe of higheſt rank, and greateſt power cannot fail to be made. You began to laugh at the ridiculous taſte, or the no taſte in gardening and building, of ſome men who are at great expence in both. What a clamor was raiſed inſtantly? The name of TIMON was applied to a noble perſon with double malice, to make him ridiculous, and you who lived in friendſhip with him, odious. By the authority that employed itſelf to encourage this clamor, and by the induſtry uſed to ſpread and ſupport it, one would have thought that you had directed your ſatyr in that epiſtle to political ſubjects, and had inveighed againſt thoſe who impoveriſh, diſhonor, and ſell their country, inſtead of making yourſelf inoffenſively merry at the expence of men who ruin none but themſelves, and render none but themſelves ridiculous. What will the clamor be, and how will the ſame authority foment it, when you proceed to laſh, in other inſtances, our want of elegance even in luxury, and our wild profuſion, the ſource of inſatiable rapacity, and almoſt univerſal venality? My mind forebodes that the time will come, and who knows how near it may be, when other powers than thoſe of Grubſtreet, may be drawn forth againſt you, and when vice and folly may be avowedly ſheltered behind a power inſtituted for better, and contrary purpoſes; for puniſhment of one, and for the reformation of both.

BUT however this may be, purſue your taſk undauntedly, and whilſt ſo many others convert the nobleſt employments of human ſociety into ſordid trades, let the generous muſe reſume her antient dignity, re-aſſert her antient prerogative, and inſtruct and reform as well as amuſe the world. Let her give a new

new turn to the thoughts of men, raiſe new affections in their minds, and determine in another and better manner the paſſions of their hearts. Poets, they ſay, were the firſt philoſophers and divines, in every country; and in ours, perhaps, the firſt inſtitutions of religion, and civil policy, were owing to our bards. Their taſk might be hard, their merit was certainly great. But if they were to riſe now from the dead, they would find the ſecond taſk, if I miſtake not, much harder than the firſt, and confeſs it more eaſy to deal with ignorance than with error. When ſocieties are once eſtabliſhed, and governments formed, men flatter themſelves that they proceed in cultivating the firſt rudiments of civility, policy, religion, and learning. But they do not obſerve that the private intereſts of many, the prejudices, affections, and paſſions of all, have a large ſhare in the work, and often the largeſt. Theſe put a ſort of bias on the mind, which makes it decline from the ſtrait courſe; and the further theſe ſuppoſed improvements are carried, the greater this declination grows, till men loſe ſight of primitive and real nature, and have no other guide but cuſtom, a ſecond and a falſe nature. The author of one is divine wiſdom, of the other, human imagination; and yet whenever the ſecond ſtands in oppoſition to the firſt, as it does moſt frequently, the ſecond prevails. From hence it happens, that the moſt civiliſed nations are often guilty of injuſtice and cruelty, which the leaſt civiliſed would abhor, and that many of the moſt abſurd opinions and doctrines, which have been impoſed in the dark ages of ignorance, continue to be the opinions, and doctrines of ages enlightened by philoſophy and learning. If I was a philoſopher, ſays MONTAIGNE, I would naturaliſe art, inſtead of artiliſing nature. The expreſſion is odd, but the ſenſe is good, and what he recommends would be done, if the reaſons that have been given, did not ſtand in the way; if the ſelf-intereſt of ſome men, the madneſs of

others, and the univerſal pride of the human heart, did not determine them to prefer error to truth, and authority to reaſon.

WHILST your muſe is employed to laſh the vicious into repentance, or to laugh the fools of the age into ſhame, and whilſt ſhe riſes ſometimes to the nobleſt ſubjects of philoſophical meditation, I ſhall throw upon paper, for your ſatisfaction, and for my own, ſome part at leaſt of what I have thought and ſaid formerly on the laſt of theſe ſubjects, as well as the reflections that they may ſuggeſt to me further in writing on them. The ſtrange ſituation I am in, and the melancholy ſtate of public affairs take up much of my time, divide or even diſſipate my thoughts, and which is worſe, drag the mind down by perpetual interruptions, from a philoſophical tone, or temper, to the drudgery of private, and public buſineſs. The laſt lies neareſt my heart, and ſince I am once more engaged in the ſervice of my country; diſarmed, gagged, and almoſt bound as I am, I will not abandon it as long as the integrity, and perſeverance of thoſe who are under none of theſe diſadvantages, and with whom I now co-operate, make it reaſonable for me to act the ſame part. Further than this, no ſhadow of duty obliges me to go. PLATO ceaſed to act for the commonwealth, when he ceaſed to perſuade; and SOLON laid down his arms before the public magazine, when PISISTRATUS grew too ſtrong to be oppoſed any longer with hopes of ſucceſs.

THO my ſituation, and my engagements are ſufficiently known to you, I chooſe to mention them on this occaſion, leſt you ſhould expect from me any thing more than I find myſelf able to perform whilſt I am in them. It has been ſaid by many, that they wanted time to make their diſcourſes ſhorter, and if this be a good excuſe, as I think it may be often, I lay in my claim

claim to it. You muſt neither expect, in what I am about to write to you, that brevity which might be expected in letters, or eſſays, nor that exactneſs of method, nor that fulneſs of the ſeveral parts which they affect to obſerve, who preſume to write philoſophical treatiſes. The merit of brevity is relative to the manner, and ſtyle, in which any ſubject is treated, as well as to the nature of it; for the ſame ſubject may be ſometimes treated very differently, and yet very properly, in both theſe reſpects. Should the poet make ſyllogiſms in verſe, or purſue a long proceſs of reaſoning in the didactic ſtyle, he would be ſure to tire his reader on the whole, like LUCRETIUS, tho he reaſoned better than the roman, and put into ſome parts of his work the ſame poetical fire. He may write, as you have begun to do, on philoſophical ſubjects, but he muſt write in his own character. He muſt contract, he may ſhadow, he has a right to omit whatever will not be caſt in the poetic mold, and when he cannot inſtruct, he may hope to pleaſe. But the philoſopher has no ſuch privileges. He may contract ſometimes, he muſt never ſhadow. He muſt be limited by his matter, leſt he ſhould grow whimſical; and by the parts of it which he underſtands beſt, leſt he ſhould grow obſcure. But theſe parts he muſt develope fully, and he has no right to omit any thing that may ſerve the purpoſe of truth, whether it pleaſe, or not. As it would be diſingenuous to ſacrifice truth to popularity, ſo it is trifling to appeal to the reaſon and experience of mankind, as every philoſophical writer does, or muſt be underſtood to do, and then to talk, like PLATO, and his antient and modern diſciples, to the imagination only. There is no need however to baniſh eloquence out of philoſophy; and truth and reaſon are no enemies to the purity, nor to the ornaments of language. But as the want of an exact determination of ideas, and of an exact preciſion in the uſe of words, is inexcuſable in a philoſopher, he muſt

pre-

preſerve them, even at the expence of ſtyle. In ſhort, it ſeems to me, that the buſineſs of the philoſopher is to dilate, if I may borrow this word from TULLY, to preſs, to prove, to convince; and that of the poet to hint, to touch his ſubject with ſhort and ſpirited ſtrokes, to warm the affections, and to ſpeak to the heart.

THO I ſeem to prepare an apology for prolixity even in writing eſſays, I will endeavour not to be tedious; and this endeavour may ſucceed the better, perhaps, by declining any over ſtrict obſervation of method. There are certain points of that which I eſteem the FIRST PHILOSOPHY, whereof I ſhall never loſe ſight; but this will be very conſiſtent with a ſort of epiſtolary licenſe. To digreſs, and to ramble are different things; and he who knows the country thro which he travels, may venture out of the high road becauſe he is ſure of finding his way back to it again. Thus the ſeveral matters that may ariſe, even accidentally before me, will have ſome ſhare in guiding my pen.

I DARE not promiſe that the ſections, or members of theſe eſſays will bear that nice proportion to one another, and to the whole, which a ſevere critic would require. All I dare promiſe you is, that my thoughts, in what order ſoever they flow, ſhall be communicated to you juſt as they paſs thro my mind, juſt as they uſe to be when we converſe together on thoſe, or any other ſubjects; when we ſaunter alone, or as we have often done with good ARBUTHNOT, and the jocoſe dean of St. Patrick's, among the multiplied ſcenes of your little garden. That theatre is large enough for my ambition. I dare not pretend to inſtruct mankind, and I am not humble enough to write to the public for any other purpoſe. I mean, by writing on ſuch ſubjects as I intend here, to make ſome

trial of my progreſs in ſearch of the moſt important truths, and to make this trial before a friend, in whom, I think, I may confide. Theſe epiſtolary eſſays, therefore, will be writ with as little regard to form, and with as little reſerve, as I uſed to ſhew in the converſations which have given occaſion to them, when I maintained the ſame opinions, and inſiſted on the ſame reaſons in defence of them.

It might ſeem ſtrange to a man, not well acquainted with the world, and in particular with the philoſophical and theological tribe, that ſo much precaution ſhould be neceſſary in the communication of our thoughts on any ſubject of the firſt philoſophy, which is of common concern to the whole race of mankind, and wherein no one can have, according to nature and truth, any ſeparate intereſt. Yet ſo it is. The ſeparate intereſts we cannot have by God's inſtitutions, are created by thoſe of man; and there is no ſubject on which men deal more unfairly with one another than this. There are ſeparate intereſts, to mention them in general only, of prejudice, and of profeſſion. By the firſt, men ſet out in the ſearch of truth under the conduct of error, and work up their heated imaginations often to ſuch a delirium, that the more genius, and the more learning they have, the madder they grow. By the ſecond, they are ſworn, as it were, to follow all their lives the authority of ſome particular ſchool, to which "tanquam ſco-"pulo adhaereſcunt*;" for the condition of their engagement is to defend certain doctrines, and even mere forms of ſpeech, without examination, or to examine only in order to defend them. By both, they become philoſophers as men became chriſtians in the primitive church, or as they determined themſelves about diſputed doctrines; for ſays Hilarius, writing to St. Austin, "Your holineſs knows, that the greateſt part of "the

* Tully.

" the faithful embrace, or refuſe to embrace a doctrine, for " no reaſon but the impreſſion which the name and authority " of ſome body or other makes on them." What now can a man who ſeeks truth, for the ſake of truth, and is indifferent where he finds it, expect from any communication of his thoughts to ſuch men as theſe? He will be much deceived, if he expects any thing better than impoſition, or altercation.

Few men have, I believe, conſulted others, both the living and the dead, with leſs preſumption, and in a greater ſpirit of docility than I have done; and the more I have conſulted, the leſs have I found of that inward conviction on which a mind that is not abſolutely implicit, can reſt. I thought, for a time, that this muſt be my fault. I diſtruſted myſelf, not my teachers, men of the greateſt name, antient and modern. But I found at laſt, that it was ſafer to truſt myſelf than them, and to proceed by the light of my own underſtanding, than to wander after theſe " ignes fatui" of philoſophy. If I am able therefore to tell you eaſily, and at the ſame time ſo clearly and diſtinctly as to be eaſily underſtood, and ſo ſtrongly as not to be eaſily refuted, how I have thought for myſelf, I ſhall be perſuaded that I have thought enough on theſe ſubjects. If I am not able to do this, it will be evident that I have not thought on them enough. I muſt review my opinions, diſcover, and correct my errors.

I have ſaid, that the ſubjects I mean, and which will be the principal objects of theſe eſſays, are thoſe of the firſt philoſophy, and it is fit therefore, that I ſhould explain what I underſtand by the firſt philoſophy. Do not imagine that I underſtand what has paſſed commonly under that name, metaphyſical pneumatics, for inſtance, or ontology. The firſt are converſant about imaginary ſubſtances, ſuch as may, and may not

exiſt. That there is a God we can demonſtrate; and altho we know nothing of his manner of being, yet we acknowledge him to be immaterial, becauſe a thouſand abſurdities, and ſuch as imply the ſtrongeſt contradiction, reſult from the ſuppoſition that the ſupreme Being is a ſyſtem of matter. But of any other ſpirits we neither have, nor can have any knowledge, and no man will be inquiſitive about ſpiritual phyſiognomy, nor go about to enquire, I believe, at this time, as EVODIUS enquired of St. AUSTIN, whether our immaterial part, the ſoul, does not remain united, when it forſakes this groſs terreſtrial body, to ſome aethereal body, more ſubtil, and more fine, which was one of the Pythagorean, and Platonic whimſies; nor be under any concern to know, if this be not the caſe of the dead, how ſouls can be diſtinguiſhed after their ſeparation, that of DIVES for example from that of LAZARUS. The ſecond, that is ontology, treats moſt ſcientifically of Being abſtracted from all Being, "de ente quatenus ens." It came in faſhion whilſt ARISTOTLE was in faſhion, and has been ſpun into an immenſe web out of ſcholaſtic brains. But it ſhould be, and I think it is already left to the acute diſciples of LEIBNITZ who dug for gold in the ordure of the ſchools, and to other German wits. Let them darken by tedious definitions, what is too plain to need any; or let them employ their vocabulary of barbarous terms, to propagate an unintelligible jargon, which is ſuppoſed to expreſs ſuch abſtractions as they cannot make, and according to which however they preſume often to control the particular, and moſt evident truths of experimental knowledge. Such reputed ſcience deſerves no rank in philoſophy, not the laſt, and much leſs the firſt.

I DESIRE you not to imagine neither, that I underſtand by the firſt philoſophy, even ſuch a ſcience as my † Lord BACON deſcribes,

† Advan. of Learn. lib. 2.

deſcribes, a ſcience of general obſervations, and axioms, ſuch as do not belong properly to any particular part of ſcience, but are common to many, " and of an higher ſtage," as he expreſſes himſelf. He complains, that philoſophers have not gone up to the " ſpring-head," which would be of " general, and " excellent uſe for the diſcloſing of nature, and the abridgment " of art;" tho they " draw now and then a bucket of water " out of the well for ſome particular uſe." I reſpect, no man more, this great authority, but I reſpect no authority enough to ſubſcribe on the faith of it, to that which appears to me fantaſtical, as if it were real. Now this ſpring-head of ſcience is purely fantaſtical, and the figure conveys a falſe notion to the mind, as figures, employed licentiouſly, are apt to do. The great author himſelf calls theſe " axioms," which are to conſtitute his firſt philoſophy, " obſervations." Such they are properly, for there are ſome uniform principles, or uniform impreſſions of the ſame nature to be obſerved in very different ſubjects, " una eademque naturae veſtigia aut ſignacula diver- " ſis materiis & ſubjectis impreſſa." Theſe obſervations, there- " fore, when they are ſufficiently verified and well eſtabliſhed, may be properly applied in diſcourſe, or writing, from one ſubject to another. But I apprehend that when they are ſo applied, they ſerve rather to illuſtrate a propoſition than to " diſcloſe " nature," or to " abridge art." They may have a better foundation than ſimilitudes, and compariſons more looſely, and more ſuperficially made. They may compare realities, not appearances; things that nature has made alike, not things that ſeem only to have ſome relation of this kind in our imaginations. But ſtill they are compariſons of things diſtinct, and independent. They do not lead us to things; but things that are lead us to make them. He who poſſeſſes two ſciences, and the ſame will be often true of arts, may find in certain reſpects a ſimilitude between them, becauſe he poſſeſſes both. If he

did not poſſeſs both, he would be led by neither to the acquiſition of the other. Such obſervations are effects, not means of knowledge, and therefore to ſuppoſe that any collection of them can conſtitute a ſcience of an "higher ſtage," from whence we may reaſon "à priori" down to particulars, is, I preſume, to ſuppoſe ſomething very groundleſs, and very uſeleſs at beſt to the advancement of knowledge. A pretended ſcience of this kind muſt be barren of knowledge, and may be fruitful of error, as the Perſian magic was, if it proceeded on the faint analogy that may be diſcovered between phyſics, and politics, and deduced the rules of civil government from what the profeſſors of it obſerved of the operations, and works of nature in the material world. The very ſpecimen of their magic, which my Lord BACON has given, would be ſufficient to juſtify what is here objected to his doctrine.

LET us conclude this head by mentioning two examples among others, which he brings to explain the better what he means by his firſt philoſophy. The firſt is this axiom †, "if "to unequals you add equals, all will be unequal." This, he ſays, is an "axiom of juſtice, as well as of mathematics," and he aſks whether there is not a "true coincidence between "commutative, and diſtributive juſtice, and arithmetical, and "geometrical proportion?" But I would aſk in my turn, whether the certainty that any arithmetician, or geometrician has of the arithmetical, or geometrical truth, will lead him to diſcover this coincidence? I aſk whether the moſt profound lawyer, who never heard, perhaps, this axiom, would be led to it by his notions of commutative, and diſtributive juſtice? Certainly not. He who is well ſkilled in arithmetic, or geometry, and in juriſprudence, may obſerve, perhaps, this uniformity of

† Si inaequalibus addas aequalia, omnia erunt inaequalia.

natural principle or impreſſion ; becauſe he is ſo ſkilled, tho to ſay the truth it be not very obvious : but he will not have derived his knowledge of it from any ſpring-head of a firſt philoſophy, from any ſcience of an "higher ſtage" than arithmetic, geometry, and juriſprudence.

THE ſecond example is this axiom [a], "that the deſtruction "of things is prevented by the reduction of them to their firſt "principles." This rule is ſaid to hold in religion, in phyſics, and in politics, and MACHIAVEL is quoted for having eſtabliſhed it in the laſt of theſe. Now, tho this axiom be generally, it is not univerſally true ; and to ſay nothing of phyſics, it will not be hard to produce, in contradiction to it, examples of religious, and civil inſtitutions, that would have periſhed if they had been kept ſtrictly to their firſt principles, and that have been ſupported by departing more or leſs from them. It may ſeem juſtly matter of wonder, that the author of "the "advancement of learning" ſhould eſpouſe this maxim in religion, and politics, as well as phyſics, ſo abſolutely, and that he ſhould place it as an axiom of his firſt philoſophy relatively to the three, ſince he could not do it without falling into the abuſe he condemns ſo much in his "organum novum [b]." the abuſe philoſophers are guilty of when they ſuffer the mind to riſe too faſt, as it is apt to do, from particulars to remote, and general axioms. That the author of the "political diſcourſes" ſhould fall into this abuſe, is not at all ſtrange. The ſame abuſe runs through all his writings, in which, among many wiſe, and many wicked reflections, and precepts, he eſtabliſhes frequently general maxims, or rules of conduct on a few particular examples, and ſometimes on a ſingle example. Upon the whole

[a] Interitus rei arcetur per reductionem ejus ad principia.

[b] ——ut intellectus à particularibus ad axiomata remota, et quaſi generaliſſima, ——ſaliat, et volet.

whole matter, one of theſe axioms communicates no knowledge but that which we muſt have before we can know the axiom, and the other may betray us into great error when we apply it to uſe, and action. One is unprofitable, the other dangerous; and the philoſophy, which admits them as principles of general knowledge, deſerves ill to be reputed philoſophy. It would have been juſt as uſeful, and much more ſafe, to admit into this receptacle of axioms, thoſe ſelf-evident, and neceſſary truths alone, of which we have an immediate perception, ſince they are not confined to any ſpecial parts of ſcience, but are common to ſeveral, or to all. Thus theſe profitable axioms, "what is, is; the whole is bigger "than a part," and divers others, might ſerve to enlarge the ſpring-head of a firſt philoſophy, and be of excellent uſe in arguing, "ex praecognitis et praeconceſſis."

If you aſk me now, what I underſtand then by a firſt philoſophy? My anſwer will be ſuch as I ſuppoſe you already prepared to receive. I underſtand by a firſt philoſophy, that which deſerves the firſt place on account of the dignity, and importance of it's objects, "natural theology or theiſm, and natural "religion or ethics." If we conſider the order of the ſciences in their riſe, and progreſs, the firſt place belongs to natural philoſophy, the mother of them all, or the trunk of the tree of knowledge, out of which, and in proportion to which, like ſo many branches, they all grow. Theſe branches ſpread wide, and bear even fruits of different kinds. But the ſap that made them ſhoot, and makes them flouriſh, riſes from the root through the trunk, and their productions are varied according to the variety of ſtrainers through which it flows. In plain terms, I ſpeak not here of ſupernatural, or revealed ſcience, and therefore, I ſay, that all ſcience, if it be real, muſt riſe from below, and from our own level. It cannot

deſcend from above, nor from ſuperior ſyſtems of being and knowledge. Truth of exiſtence is truth of knowledge, and therefore reaſon ſearches after them in one of theſe ſcenes, where both are to be found together, and are within our reach; whilſt imagination hopes fondly to find them in another, where both of them are to be found, but ſurely not by us. The notices we receive from without concerning the beings that ſurround us, and the inward conſciouſneſs we have of our own, are the foundations, and the true criterions too, of all the knowledge we acquire of body and of mind; and body and mind are objects alike of natural philoſophy. We aſſume commonly that they are two diſtinct ſubſtances. Be it ſo. They are ſtill united, and blended, as it were, together, in one human nature: and all natures, united or not, fall within the province of natural philoſophy. On the hypotheſis indeed that body and ſoul are two diſtinct ſubſtances, one of which ſubſiſts after the diſſolution of the other, certain men who have taken the whimſical title of metaphyſicians, as if they had ſcience beyond the bounds of nature, or of nature diſcoverable by others, have taken likewiſe to themſelves the doctrine of mind, and have left that of body, under the name of phyſics, to a ſuppoſed inferior order of philoſophers. But the right of theſe ſtands good; for all the knowledge that can be acquired about mind, or the unextended ſubſtance of the Carteſians, muſt be acquired, like that about body, or the extended ſubſtance, within the bounds of their province, and by the means they employ, particular experiments and obſervations. Nothing can be true of mind, any more than of body, that is repugnant to theſe; and an intellectual hypotheſis, which is not ſupported by the intellectual phaenomena, is, at leaſt, as ridiculous as a corporeal hypotheſis which is not ſupported by the corporeal phaenomena.

If I have ſaid thus much in this place concerning natural philoſophy, it has not been without good reaſon. I conſider theology, and ethics as the firſt of ſciences in pre-eminence of rank. But I conſider the conſtant contemplation of nature, by which I mean the whole ſyſtem of God's works, as far as it lies open to us, as the common ſpring of all ſciences, and even of theſe. What has been ſaid, agreeably to this notion, ſeems to me evidently true; and yet metaphyſical divines and philoſophers proceed in direct contradiction to it, and have thereby, if I miſtake not, bewildered themſelves and a great part of mankind, in ſuch inextricable labyrinths of hypothetical reaſoning, that few men can find their way back, and none can find it forward into the road of truth. To dwell long, and on ſome points always, in particular knowledge, tires the patience of theſe impetuous philoſophers. They fly to generals. To conſider, attentively, even the minuteſt phaenomena of body and mind mortifies their pride. Rather than creep up ſlowly, à poſteriori, to a little general knowledge, they ſoar at once as far, and as high, as imagination can carry them. From thence they deſcend again armed with ſyſtems and arguments à priori, and regardleſs how theſe agree, or claſh with the phaenomena of nature, they impoſe them on mankind.

It is this manner of philoſophiſing, this prepoſterous method of beginning our ſearch after truth, out of the bounds of human knowledge, or of continuing it beyond them, that has corrupted natural theology, and natural religion in all ages. They have been corrupted to ſuch a degree, that it is grown, and was ſo long ſince, as neceſſary to plead the cauſe of God, if I may uſe this expreſſion after SENECA, againſt the divine, as againſt the atheiſt; to aſſert his exiſtence againſt the latter, to

to defend his attributes againſt the former, and to juſtify his providence againſt both. To both, a ſincere and humble theiſt might ſay very properly, "I make no difference between "you on many occaſions; becauſe it is indifferent * whether "you deny, or defame the ſupreme Being;" nay, PLUTARCH, tho little orthodox in theology, was not in the wrong, perhaps, when he declared the laſt to be the worſt.

IN treating the ſubjects about which I ſhall write to you in theſe letters, or eſſays, it will be therefore neceſſary to diſtinguiſh genuine and pure theiſm, from the unnatural, and profane mixtures of human imagination; "what we can know of "God, from what we cannot know." This is the more neceſſary too; becauſe, whilſt true and falſe notions about God and religion are blended together in our minds, under one ſpecious name of ſcience, the falſe are more likely to make men doubt of the true, as it often happens, than to perſuade men that they are true themſelves. Now in order to this purpoſe, nothing can be more effectual than to go to the root of error, of that primitive error which encourages our curioſity, ſuſtains our pride, fortifies our prejudices, and gives pretence to deluſion. This primitive error conſiſts in the high opinion we are apt to entertain of the human mind, tho it holds, in truth, a very low rank in the intellectual ſyſtem. To cure this error, we need only turn our eyes inward, and contemplate impartially what paſſes there from the infancy to the maturity of the mind. Thus it will not be difficult, and thus alone it is poſſible, to diſcover the true nature of human knowledge, how far it extends, how far it is real, and where, and how it begins to be fantaſtical.

SUCH an enquiry, if it cannot check the preſumption, nor humble the pride of metaphyſicians, may ſerve to undeceive others.

* Utrum deum neges an infames.

others. Locke purſued it. He grounded all he taught on the phaenomena of nature. He appealed to the experience and conſcious knowledge of every one, and rendered all he advanced intelligible. Leibnitz, one of the vaineſt, and moſt chimerical men that ever got a name in philoſophy, and who is often ſo unintelligible, that no man ought to believe he underſtood himſelf, cenſured Locke as a ſuperficial philoſopher. What has happened? The philoſophy of one has forced it's way into general approbation: that of the other has carried no conviction, and ſcarce any information to thoſe who have miſpent their time about it. To ſpeak the truth, tho it may ſeem a paradox, our knowledge on many ſubjects, and particularly on thoſe which we intend here, muſt be ſuperficial to be real. This is the condition of humanity. We are placed, as it were, in an intellectual twilight, where we diſcover but few things clearly, and none intirely, and yet ſee juſt enough to tempt us with the hope of making better and more diſcoveries. Thus flattered, men puſh their enquiries on, and may be properly enough compared to * Ixion, who "imagined he had Juno in his arms whilſt he embraced a "cloud."

To be contented to know things, as God has made us capable of knowing them, is then a firſt principle neceſſary to ſecure us from falling into error; and if there is any ſubject upon which we ſhould be moſt on our guard againſt error, it is ſurely that which I have called here the "firſt philoſophy." God is hid from us in the majeſty of his nature, and the little we diſcover of him, muſt be diſcovered by the light that is reflected from his works. Out of this light, therefore, we ſhould never go in our enquiries and reaſonings about his nature, his attributes, and the order of his providence: and

* Lord Bacon.

yet upon theſe ſubjects, men depart the furtheſt from it, nay, they who depart the furtheſt, are the beſt heard by the bulk of mankind. The leſs men know, the more they believe that they know. Belief paſſes in their minds for knowledge: and the very circumſtances, which ſhould beget doubt, produce increaſe of faith. Every glittering apparition that is pointed out to them, in the vaſt wild of imagination, paſſes for a reality: and the more diſtant, the more confuſed, the more incomprehenſible it is, the more ſublime it is eſteemed. He who ſhould attempt to ſhift theſe ſcenes of airy viſion, for thoſe of real knowledge, might expect to be treated with ſcorn and anger, by the whole theological, and metaphyſical tribe, the maſters, and the ſcholars. He would be diſpiſed as a plebean philoſopher, and railed at as an infidel. It would be ſounded high, that he debaſed human nature, which has a cognation, ſo the reverend and learned doctor CUDWORTH calls it, with the divine, that the ſoul of man, immaterial and immortal by it's nature, was made to contemplate higher and nobler objects than this ſenſible world, and even than itſelf; ſince it was made to contemplate God, and to be united to him. In ſuch clamor as this, the voice of truth and of reaſon would be drowned, and with both of them on his ſide, he who oppoſed it would make many enemies, and few converts. Nay, I am apt to think, that ſome of theſe, if he made any, would ſay to him, as ſoon as the gaudy viſions of error were diſpelled, and till they were accuſtomed to the ſimplicity of truth, "pol me "occidiſtis." Prudence forbids me, therefore, to write as I think to the world, whilſt friendſhip forbids me to write otherwiſe to you. I have been a martyr of faction in politics, and have no vocation to be ſo in philoſophy.

BUT there is another conſideration which deſerves more regard, becauſe it is of a public nature, and becauſe the common

mon intereſts of ſociety may be affected by it. Truth and falſhood, knowledge and ignorance, revelations of the Creator, inventions of the creature, dictates of reaſon, ſallies of enthuſiaſm, have been blended ſo long together in our ſyſtems of theology, that it may be thought dangerous to ſeparate them; leſt by attacking ſome parts of theſe ſyſtems we ſhould ſhake the whole. It may be thought that error, itſelf, deſerves to be reſpected on this account, and that men who are deluded for their good, ſhould be deluded on.

Some ſuch reflections as theſe it is probable that Erasmus made, when he obſerved in one of his letters to Melancthon, that Plato, dreaming of a philoſophical commonwealth, ſaw the impoſſibility of governing the multitude without deceiving them. "Let not chriſtians lye, ſays this great divine, but "let it not be thought neither, that every truth ought to be "thrown out to the vulgar." "Non expedit omnem veri-"tatem prodere vulgo." Scaevola and Varro were more explicit than Erasmus, and more reaſonable than Plato. They held not only that many truths were to be concealed from the vulgar, but that it was expedient the vulgar ſhould believe many things that were falſe. They diſtinguiſhed at the ſame time very rightly, between the regard due to religions already eſtabliſhed, and the conduct to be held in the eſtabliſhment of them. The Greek aſſumed, that men could not be governed by truth, and erected on this principle a fabulous theology. The Romans were not of the ſame opinion. Varro declared expreſsly, that if he had been to frame a new inſtitution, he would have framed it "ex naturae potius formulâ." But they both thought that things evidently falſe might deſerve an outward reſpect, when they are interwoven into a ſyſtem of government. This outward reſpect every good citizen will ſhew them in ſuch a caſe, and they can claim no more in any.

He will not propagate theſe errors, but he will be cautious how he propagates even truth, in oppoſition to them.

THERE has been much noiſe made about free thinking, and men have been animated, in the conteſt, by a ſpirit that becomes neither the character of divines, nor that of good citizens; by an arbitrary tyrannical ſpirit under the maſk of religious zeal, and by a preſumptuous, factious ſpirit under that of liberty. If the firſt could prevail, they would eſtabliſh implicit belief and blind obedience, and an inquiſition to maintain this abject ſervitude. To aſſert Antipodes might become once more as heretical as arianiſm, or pelagianiſm: and men might be dragged to the jails of ſome holy office, like GALILEI, for ſaying they had ſeen what in fact they had ſeen, and what every one elſe that pleaſed might ſee. If the ſecond could prevail, they would deſtroy at once the general influence of religion, by ſhaking the foundations of it which education had laid. Theſe are wide extremes. Is there no middle path in which a reaſonable man and a good citizen may direct his ſteps? I think there is.

EVERY one has an undoubted right to think freely: nay, it is the duty of every one to do ſo, as far as he has the neceſſary means, and opportunities. This duty too is in no caſe ſo incumbent on him, as in thoſe that regard what I call, the firſt philoſophy. They who have neither means nor opportunities of this ſort, muſt ſubmit their opinions to authority: and to what authority can they reſign themſelves ſo properly, and ſo ſafely as to that of the laws, and conſtitution of their country? In general nothing can be more abſurd than to take opinions, of the greateſt moment, and ſuch as concern us the moſt intimately, on truſt. But there is no help againſt it in many particular caſes. Things the moſt abſurd in ſpeculation become

neceſſary in practice. Such is the human conſtitution, and reaſon excuſes them on the account of this neceſſity. Reaſon does even a little more; and it is all ſhe can do. She gives the beſt direction poſſible to the abſurdity. Thus ſhe directs thoſe who muſt believe becauſe they cannot know, to believe in the laws of their country, and conform their opinions and practice to thoſe of their anceſtors, to thoſe of CORUNCANIUS, of SCIPIO, of SCAEVOLA, not to thoſe of ZENO, of CLEANTHES, of CHRYSIPPUS *.

BUT now the ſame reaſon that gives this direction to ſuch men as theſe will give a very contrary direction to thoſe who have the means, and opportunities the others want. Far from adviſing them to ſubmit to this mental bondage, ſhe will adviſe them to employ their whole induſtry, to exert the utmoſt freedom of thought, and to reſt on no authority but her's, that is their own. She will ſpeak to them in the language of the Soufys, a ſect of philoſophers in Perſia, that travellers have mentioned. "Doubt, ſay theſe wiſe and honeſt free-"thinkers, is the key of knowledge. He who never doubts, "never examines. He who never examines, diſcovers nothing. "He who diſcovers nothing, is blind, and will remain ſo. "If you find no reaſon to doubt concerning the opinions "of your fathers, keep to them, they will be ſufficient for "you. If you find any reaſon to doubt concerning them, "ſeek the truth quietly, but take care not to diſturb the minds "of other men."

LET us proceed agreeably to theſe maxims. Let us ſeek truth, but ſeek it quietly as well as freely. Let us not imagine, like ſome who are called free-thinkers, that every man, who can think and judge for himſelf, as he has a right to do, has

* De nat. deor.

has therefore a right of ſpeaking, any more than of acting according to the full freedom of his thoughts. The freedom belongs to him as a rational creature. He lies under the reſtraint as a member of ſociety.

If the religion we profeſs contained nothing more than articles of faith, and points of doctrine clearly revealed to us in the goſpel, we might be obliged to renounce our natural freedom of thought in favor of this ſupernatural authority. But ſince it is notorious that a certain order of men, who call themſelves the church, have been employed to make and propagate a theological ſyſtem of their own, which they call chriſtianity, from the days of the apoſtles, and even from theſe days incluſively; it is our duty to examine, and analyze the whole, that we may diſtinguiſh what is divine from what is human; adhere to the firſt implicitly, and aſcribe to the laſt no more authority than the word of man deſerves.

Such an examination is the more neceſſary to be undertaken by every one who is concerned for the truth of his religion, and for the honor of chriſtianity, becauſe the firſt preachers of it were not, and they who preach it ſtill are not agreed about many of the moſt important points of their ſyſtem; becauſe the controverſies raiſed by theſe men have baniſhed union, peace, and charity out of the chriſtian world; and becauſe ſome parts of the ſyſtem favour ſo much of ſuperſtition, and enthuſiaſm, that all the prejudices of education, and the whole weight of civil and eccleſiaſtical power can hardly keep them in credit. Theſe conſiderations deſerve the more attention, becauſe nothing can be more true than what Plutarch ſaid of old, and my Lord Bacon has ſaid ſince; one, that "ſuperſtition," and the other, that "vain controverſies" are principal cauſes of atheiſm.

I NEITHER expect nor deſire to ſee any public reviſion made of the preſent ſyſtem of chriſtianity. I ſhould fear an attempt to alter the eſtabliſhed religion as much as they who have the moſt bigot attachment to it, and for reaſons as good as theirs, tho not entirely the ſame. I ſpeak only of the duty of every private man to examine for himſelf, which would have an immediate good effect relatively to himſelf, and might have in time a good effect relatively to the public, ſince it would diſpoſe the minds of men to a greater indifference about theological diſputes, which are the diſgrace of chriſtianity, and have been the plagues of the world.

WILL you tell me that private judgment muſt ſubmit to the eſtabliſhed authority of "fathers" and "councils?" My anſwer ſhall be that the fathers ancient, and modern, in councils, and out of them, have raiſed that immenſe ſyſtem of "artificial theology," by which genuine chriſtianity is perverted, and in which it is loſt. Theſe "fathers" are "fathers" of the worſt ſort, ſuch as contrive to keep their children in a perpetual ſtate of infancy, that they may exerciſe perpetual, and abſolute dominion over them. "Quo magis regnum in "illos exerceant pro ſuâ libidine *." I call their theology "artificial," becauſe it is in a multitude of inſtances conformable neither to the religion of nature, nor to goſpel chriſtianity, but often repugnant to both, tho ſaid to be founded on them. I ſhall have occaſion to mention ſeveral ſuch inſtances in the courſe of theſe little eſſays. Here I will only obſerve, that if it be hard to conceive how any thing ſo abſurd as the pagan theology ſtands repreſented by the fathers who wrote againſt it, and as it really was, could ever gain credit among rational creatures, it is full as hard to conceive how the

* ERASMUS.

"artificial"

" artificial" theology we ſpeak of could ever prevail, not only in ages of ignorance, but in the moſt enlightened. There is a letter of St. AUSTIN, wherein he ſays *, that he was aſhamed of himſelf when he refuted the opinions of the former, and that he was aſhamed of mankind when he conſidered that ſuch abſurdities were received, and defended. The reflections might be retorted on the ſaint, ſince he broached, and defended doctrines as unworthy of the ſupreme all-perfect Being, as thoſe which the heathens taught concerning their fictitious, and inferior gods. Is it neceſſary to quote any other than that, by which we are taught that God has created numbers of men for no purpoſe but to damn them? " Quiſquis praedeſtinationis " doctrinam invidiâ gravat †," ſays CALVIN, "apertè maledicit " deo." Let us ſay " Quiſquis praedeſtinationis doctrinam " aſſerit, blaſphemat." Let us not impute ſuch cruel injuſtice to the all-perfect Being. Let PAUL, and AUSTIN, and CALVIN, and all thoſe who teach it be anſwerable for it alone. You may bring " fathers" and " councils" as evidences in the cauſe of artificial theology: but " reaſon" muſt be the judge, and all I contend for is, that ſhe ſhould be ſo in the breaſt of every chriſtian that can appeal to her tribunal.

WILL you tell me that even ſuch a private examination of the chriſtian ſyſtem as I propoſe that every man, who is able to make it, ſhould make for himſelf, is unlawful, and that if any doubts ariſe in our minds concerning religion, we muſt have recourſe for the ſolution of them to ſome of that " holy " order" which was inſtituted by God himſelf, and which has been continued by the impoſition of hands in every chriſtian ſociety from the " apoſtles" down to the preſent " clergy?" My

* ——jam pudet me iſta refellere cum eos non puduerit iſta ſentire. Cum verò auſi ſint etiam defendere, &c.

† Cal. Inſ. lib. 3. c. 21.

My anſwer ſhall be ſhortly this, it is repugnant to all the ideas of wiſdom and goodneſs to believe that the univerſal terms of ſalvation are knowable by the means of one order of men alone, and that they continue to be ſo even after they have been publiſhed to all nations. Some of your directors will tell you, that whilſt Chriſt was on earth, the apoſtles were the church, that he was the biſhop of it, that afterwards the admiſſion of men into this order was approved, and confirmed by viſions and other divine manifeſtations, and that theſe wonderful proofs of God's interpoſition at the ordinations, and conſecrations of preſbyters, and biſhops laſted even in the time of St. CYPRIAN, that is, in the middle of the third century. It is pity that they laſted no longer for the honor of the church, and for the conviction of thoſe who do not ſufficiently reverence the religious ſociety. It were to be wiſhed perhaps, that ſome of the ſecrets of electricity were improved enough to be piouſly, and uſefully applied to this purpoſe. If we beheld a SHECINAH, or divine preſence, like the flame of a taper, on the heads of thoſe who receive the impoſition of hands, we might believe that they receive the "Holy Ghoſt" at the ſame time. But as we have no reaſon to believe what ſuperſtitious, credulous, or lying men, ſuch as CYPRIAN himſelf was, reported formerly, that they might eſtabliſh the proud pretenſions of the clergy; ſo we have no reaſon to believe that five men of this order have any more of the divine ſpirit in our time, after they are ordained, than they had before. It would be a farce to provoke laughter, if there was no ſuſpicion of prophanation in it, to ſee them gravely lay hands on one another, and bid one another receive the Holy Ghoſt.

WILL you tell me finally, in oppoſition to what has been ſaid, and that you may anticipate what remains to be ſaid, that

laymen are not only unauthorized, but quite unequal without the aſſiſtance of divines to the taſk I propoſe? If you do, I ſhall make no ſcruple to tell you, in return, that laymen may be, if they pleaſe, in every reſpect as fit, and are in one important reſpect more fit than divines to go through this examination, and to judge for themſelves upon it. We ſay that the ſcriptures, concerning the divine authenticity of which all the profeſſors of chriſtianity agree, are the ſole criterion of chriſtianity. You add tradition, concerning which there may be, and there is much diſpute. We have then a certain invariable rule, whenever the ſcriptures ſpeak plainly. Whenever they do not ſpeak ſo, we have this comfortable aſſurance, that doctrines, which no body underſtands, are revealed to no body, and are therefore improper objects of human enquiry. We know too, that if we receive the explanations and commentaries of theſe dark ſayings from the clergy, we take the greateſt part of our religion from the word of man, not from the word of God. Tradition indeed, however derived, is not to be totally rejected; for if it was, how came the canon of the ſcriptures, even of the goſpels, to be fixed? How was it conveyed down to us? Traditions of general facts, and general propoſitions plain and uniform may be of ſome authority and uſe. But particular, anecdotical traditions, whoſe original authority is unknown, or juſtly ſuſpicious, and that have acquired only an appearance of generality, and notoriety, becauſe they have been frequently, and boldly repeated from age to age, deſerve no more regard, than doctrines evidently added to the ſcriptures under pretence of explaining, and commenting them, by men as fallible as ourſelves. We may receive the ſcriptures, and be perſuaded of their authenticity on the faith of eccleſiaſtical tradition; but it ſeems to me, that we may reject, at the ſame time, all the artificial theology which has been raiſed on theſe ſcriptures

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by doctors of the church, with as much right as they receive the Old Teſtament on the authority of jewiſh ſcribes, and doctors, whilſt they reject the oral law, and all rabinical literature.

He who examines on ſuch principles as theſe, which are comformable to truth and reaſon, may lay aſide at once the immenſe volumes of fathers, and councils, of ſchoolmen, caſuiſts, and controverſial writers, which have perplexed the world ſo long. Natural religion will be to ſuch a man no longer intricate; revealed religion will be no longer myſterious, nor the word of God equivocal. Clearneſs and preciſion are two great excellencies of human laws. How much more ſhould we expect to find them in the law of God? They have been baniſhed from thence by artificial theology; and he who is deſirous to find them muſt baniſh the profeſſors of it from his councils, inſtead of conſulting them. He muſt ſeek for genuine chriſtianity with that ſimplicity of ſpirit, with which it is taught in the goſpel by Chriſt himſelf. He muſt do the very reverſe of what has been done by the perſons you adviſe him to conſult.

You ſee that I have ſaid what has been ſaid on a ſuppoſition, that however obſcure theology may be, the chriſtian religion is extremely plain, and requires no great learning, nor deep meditation to develope it. But if it was not ſo plain, if both theſe were neceſſary to develope it, is great learning the monopoly of the clergy ſince the reſurrection of letters, as a little learning was before that aera? Is deep meditation, and juſtneſs of reaſoning confined to men of that order by a peculiar and excluſive privilege? In ſhort, and to aſk a queſtion which experience will decide, have theſe men, who boaſt that they are appointed by God to be the

interpreters of his ſecret will, to repreſent his perſon, and anſwer in his name, as it were, out of the ſanctuary *, have theſe men, I ſay, been able in more than ſeventeen centuries, to eſtabliſh an uniform ſyſtem of revealed religion, for natural religion never wanted their help, among the civil ſocieties of chriſtians, or even in their own †? They do not ſeem to have aimed at this deſirable end. Divided as they have always been, they have always ſtudied in order to believe §, and to take upon truſt, or to find matter of diſcourſe, or to contradict and confute, but never to conſider impartially, nor to uſe a free judgment. On the contrary, they who have attempted to uſe this freedom of judgment have been conſtantly, and cruelly perſecuted by them.

THE firſt ſteps towards the eſtabliſhment of artificial theology, which has paſſed for chriſtianity ever ſince, were enthuſiaſtical. They were not heretics alone, who delighted in wild allegories, and the pompous jargon of myſtery. They were the orthodox fathers of the firſt ages, they were the diſciples of the apoſtles, or the ſcholars of their diſciples; for the truth of which I may appeal to the epiſtles, and other writings of theſe men that are extant, to thoſe of CLEMENS, of IGNATIUS, or of IRENAEUS, for inſtance, and to the viſions of HERMES that have ſo near a reſemblance to the productions of BUNYAN.

THE next ſteps of the ſame kind were rhetorical. They were made by men who declaimed much, and reaſoned ill, but who impoſed on the imaginations of others by the heat of their own, by their hyperboles, their exaggerations, the acrimony of their ſtyle, and their violent invectives. Such were the

* N. B. I chuſe to borrow theſe expreſſions from CALVIN, in order to ſhew how much they aſcribe who are ſuppoſed to aſcribe the leaſt to this order.

† Cal. inſ. l. 4. c. 3. § BACON's Eſſays.

the CHRYSOSTOMS the JEROMS, an HILARIUS, a CYRIL, and moſt of the fathers.

THE laſt of the ſteps I ſhall mention were logical, and theſe were made very opportunely, and very advantageouſly for the church, and for artificial theology. Abſurdity in ſpeculation and ſuperſtition in practice had been cultivated ſo long, and were become ſo groſs, that men began to ſee through the veils that had been thrown over them, as ignorant as thoſe ages were. Then the ſchoolmen aroſe. I need not diſplay their character, it is enough known. This only I will ſay, that having very few materials of knowledge, and much ſubtilty of wit, they wrought up ſyſtems of fancy on the little they knew; and invented an art, by the help of ARISTOTLE, not of enlarging, but of puzzling knowedge with technical terms, with definitions, diſtinctions, and ſylogiſms merely verbal: they taught what they could not explain, evaded what they could not anſwer, and he who had the moſt ſkill in this art, might put to ſilence, when it came into general uſe, the man who was conſciouſly certain that he had truth, and reaſon on his ſide.

THE authority of the ſchools laſted till the reſurrection of letters. But as ſoon as real knowledge was enlarged, and the conduct of the underſtanding better underſtood, it fell into contempt. The advocates of artificial theology have had, ſince that time, a very hard taſk. They have been obliged to defend in the light what was impoſed in the dark, and to acquire knowledge to juſtify ignorance. They were drawn to it with reluctancy. But learning, that grew up among the laity, and controverſies with one another, made this unavoidable, which was not eligible, on the principles of eccleſiaſtical policy. They have done with theſe new arms, all that great parts,

great

great pains, and great zeal could do under ſuch diſadvantages, and we may apply to this order, on this occaſion, " ſi per- " gama dextrâ, &c." But their Troy cannot be defended, irreparable breaches have been made in it. They have improved in learning and knowledge; but this improvement has been general, and as remarkable, at leaſt among the laity as among the clergy. Beſides which, it muſt be owned that the former have had in this reſpect a ſort of indirect obligation to the latter, for whilſt theſe men have ſearched into antiquity, have improved criticiſm, and almoſt exhauſted ſubtilty, they have furniſhed ſo many arms the more to ſuch of the others as do not ſubmit implicitly to them, but examine and judge for themſelves. By refuting one another when they differ, they have made it no hard matter to refute them all when they agree: and, I believe, there are few books written to propagate, or defend the received notions of artificial theology, which may not be refuted by the books themſelves. I conclude on the whole, that laymen have, or need to have, no want of the clergy in examining; and analyſing the religion they profeſs.

But, I ſaid, that they are in one important reſpect more fit to go through this examination without the help of divines than with it. A layman, who ſeeks the truth, may fall into error; but as he can have no intereſt to deceive himſelf, ſo he has none of profeſſion to bias his private judgment, any more than to engage him to deceive others. Now the clergyman lies ſtrongly under this influence in every communion. How indeed ſhould it be otherwiſe? Theology is become one of thoſe ſciences which Seneca calls, " ſcientiae in lucrum exe- " untes:" and ſciences, like arts, whoſe object is gain, are, in good Engliſh, trades. Such theology is; and men who could make no fortune, except the loweſt, in any other, make often

the highest in this; for the proof of which assertion I might produce some signal instances among my lords the bishops. The consequence has been uniform, for how ready soever the tradesmen of one church are to expose the false wares, that is, the errors, and abuses of another, they never admit that there are any in their own: and he who admitted this, in some particular instance, would be driven out of the ecclesiastical company, as a false brother, and one who spoiled the trade.

Thus it comes to pass that new churches may be established by the dissentions, but that old ones cannot be reformed by the concurrence, of the clergy. There is no composition to be made with this order of men. He, who does not believe all they teach in every communion, is reputed nearly as criminal, as he who believes no part of it. He who cannot assent to the athanasian creed, of which archbishop Tillotson said, as I have heard, that he wished we were well rid, would receive no better quarter than an atheist from the generality of the clergy. What recourse now has a man who cannot be thus implicit? Some have run into scepticism, some into atheism, and, for fear of being imposed on by others, have imposed on themselves. The way to avoid these extremes, is that which has been chalked out in this introduction. We may think freely, without thinking as licentiously as divines do, when they raise a system of imagination on true foundations; or as sceptics do when they renounce all knowledge; or as atheists do when they attempt to demolish the foundations of all religion, and reject demonstration. As we think for ourselves, we may keep our thoughts to ourselves, or, communicate them with a due reserve, and in such a manner only, as it may be done without offending the laws of our country, and disturbing the public peace.

I can-

I CANNOT conclude my diſcourſe on this occaſion better than by putting you in mind of a paſſage you quoted to me once, with great applauſe, from a ſermon of FOSTER, and to this effect: "Where myſtery begins, religion ends." The apothegme pleaſed me much, and I was glad to hear ſuch a truth from any pulpit, ſince it ſhews an inclination, at leaſt, to purify chriſtianity from the leaven of artificial theology, which conſiſts principally in making things that are very plain myſterious, and in pretending to make things that are impenetrably myſterious very plain. If you continue ſtill of the ſame mind, I ſhall have no excuſe to make to you for what I have written, and ſhall write. Our opinions coincide. If you have changed your mind, think again, and examine further. You will find that it is the modeſt, not the preſumptuous enquirer who makes a real, and ſafe progreſs in the diſcovery of divine truths. One follows nature, and nature's God, that is, he follows God in his works, and in his word; nor preſumes to go further by metaphyſical and theological commentaries of his own invention, than the two texts, if I may uſe this expreſſion, carry him very evidently. They who have done otherwiſe, and have affected to diſcover, by a ſuppoſed ſcience derived from tradition, or taught in the ſchools, more than they who have not ſuch ſcience can diſcover concerning the nature, phyſical and moral, of the ſupreme Being, and concerning the ſecrets of his providence, have been either enthuſiaſts, or knaves, or elſe of that numerous tribe who reaſon well very often, but reaſon always on ſome arbitrary ſuppoſition.

MUCH of this character belonged to the heathen divines, and it is, in all it's parts, peculiarly that of the antient fathers, and modern doctors of the chriſtian church. The former had reaſon, but no revelation to guide them; and tho reaſon be al-

ways one, we cannot wonder that different prejudices, and different tempers of imagination warped it in them, on ſuch ſubjects as theſe, and produced all the extravagancies of their theology. The latter had not the excuſe of human frailty to make in mitigation of their preſumption. On the contrary, the conſideration of this frailty, inſeparable from their nature, aggravated their preſumption. They had a much ſurer criterion than human reaſon, they had divine reaſon, and the word of God to guide them, and to limit their enquiries. How came they to go beyond this criterion? Many of the firſt preachers were led into it becauſe they preached or writ before there was any ſuch criterion eſtabliſhed, in the acceptance of which they all agreed; becauſe they preached or writ in the mean time, on the faith of tradition, and on a confidence that they were perſons extraordinarily gifted. Other reaſons ſucceeded theſe. Skill in languages, not the gift of tongues, ſome knowledge of the jewiſh cabala, and ſome of heathen philoſophy, of PLATO's eſpecially, made them preſume to comment, and under that pretence to enlarge the ſyſtem of chriſtianity, with as much licenſe as they could have taken, if the word of man, inſtead of the word of God, had been concerned, and they had commented the civil, not the divine law. They did this ſo copiouſly, that, to give one inſtance of it, the expoſition of St. MATTHEW's goſpel took up ninety homelies, and that of St. JOHN's eighty-ſeven in the works of CHRYSOSTOM; which puts me in mind of a puritanical parſon *, who, if I miſtake not, for I have never looked into the folio ſince I was a boy and condemned ſometimes to read in it, made one hundred and nineteen ſermons on the hundred and nineteenth pſalm.

Now all theſe men, both heathens and chriſtians, appeared gigantic forms through the falſe medium of imagination, and

* DR. MANTON.

habitual prejudice; but were, in truth, as arrant dwarfs in the knowledge to which they pretended, as you and I and all the ſons of ADAM. The former, however, deſerved ſome excuſe: the latter none. The former made a very ill uſe of their reaſon, no doubt, when they preſumed to dogmatize about the divine nature; but they deceived no body. What they taught, they taught on their own authority, which every other man was at liberty to receive, or reject, which as he approved or diſapproved the doctrine. Chriſtians, on the other hand, made a very ill uſe of revelation and reaſon both. Inſtead of employing the ſuperior principle to direct and confine the inferior, they employed it to ſanctify all that wild imagination, the paſſions, and the intereſts of the eccleſiaſtical order ſuggeſted. This abuſe of revelation was ſo ſcandalous, that whilſt they were building up a ſyſtem of religion, under the name of chriſtianity, every one who ſought to ſignalize himſelf in the enterprize, and they were multitudes, dragged the ſcriptures to his opinion by different interpretations, paraphraſes, and comments. ARIUS and NESTORIUS both, pretended that they had it on their ſides: ATHANASIUS and CYRIL on theirs. They rendered the word of God ſo dubious, that it ceaſed to be a criterion, and they had recourſe to another, to councils and the decrees of councils. He muſt be very ignorant in eccleſiaſtical antiquity, who does not know by what intrigues of the contending factions, for ſuch they were and of the worſt kind, theſe decrees were obtained: and yet an opinion prevailing that the Holy Ghoſt, the ſame divine Spirit who dictated the ſcriptures, preſided in theſe aſſemblies and dictated their decrees, their decrees paſſed for infallible deciſions, and ſanctified, little by little, much of the ſuperſtition, the nonſenſe, and even the blaſphemy which the fathers taught, and all the uſurpations of the church. This opinion prevailed, and influenced the minds of men, ſo powerfully, and ſo

long, that ERASMUS, who owns, in one of his letters, that the writings of OECOLAMPADIUS, againſt tranſubſtantiation, ſeemed ſufficient to ſeduce even the elect, "ut ſeduci poſſe videantur, "etiam electi," declares in another, that nothing hindered him from embracing the doctrine of OECOLAMPADIUS, but the conſent of the church to the other doctrine, "niſi obſtaret "conſenſus eccleſiae." Thus artificial theology roſe on the demolitions, not on the foundations, of chriſtianity; was incorporated into it, and became a principal part of it. How much it becomes a good chriſtian to diſtinguiſh them in his private thoughts, at leaſt, and how unfit even the greateſt, the moſt moderate, and the leaſt ambitious of the eccleſiaſtical order are to aſſiſt us in making this diſtinction, I have endeavoured to ſhew you by reaſon, and by example.

IT remains then, that we apply ourſelves to the ſtudy of the firſt philoſophy without any other guides than the works, and the word of God. In natural religion the clergy are unneceſſary, in revealed they are dangerous guides.

ESSAY THE FIRST.

CONCERNING

The NATURE, EXTENT, and REALITY

OF

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

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The NATURE, EXTENT and REALITY

OF

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

SECTION I.

AMONG the many cavils that have been deviſed againſt the demonſtrated exiſtence of a firſt, intelligent, ſelf-exiſtent Cauſe of all things, this has been one; that things known muſt be anterior to knowledge, and that we may as well aſſert that the images of objects we ſee reflected made thoſe objects, as that knowledge, or intelligence made them. HOBBES is accuſed of reaſoning on this principle in his Leviathan, and his book de Cive, by the author of the Intellectual Syſtem of the Univerſe, and his argument in the place, where he mentions the notions that reaſon dictates to us, concerning the divine attributes, is thus ſtated. "Since "knowledge, and intelligence are nothing more in us, than "a tumult of the mind, excited by the preſſure of ex-"ternal objects on our organs, we muſt not imagine there is

"any

" any ſuch thing in God, theſe being things which depend " on natural cauſes." Now I think, this charge a little too haſtily brought, and a little too heavily laid. So will any man who reads the context. Hobbes having ſaid that, when we aſcribe will to God, we muſt not conceive it to be in him, what it is in us, but muſt ſuppoſe it to be ſomething analogous which we cannot conceive. He adds, " in " like manner when we attribute ſight, and other ſenſations, or " knowledge, and intelligence to God, which are in us no- " thing more, than a certain tumult of the mind, excited by " the preſſure of external objects on our organs, we muſt " not imagine that any thing like this happens to God." I am far from ſubſcribing to many notions which Hobbes has advanced. But ſtill the plain and obvious meaning of this paſſage, according to my apprehenſion, is not to deny that the ſupreme Being is an intelligent Being, but to diſtinguiſh between the Divine and human manner of knowing. If Hobbes did not aſſert a diſtinct kind of knowledge, and attribute " the ſame clearly to God Almighty" upon this occaſion, the omiſſion will not ſerve to fix the brand of atheiſm upon him. On the contrary, whatever his other opinions were, this opinion may be reconciled to the moſt orthodox theiſm. It is more reaſonable and carries along with it a more becoming reverence, than the learned writer who makes the objection ſhews; when, like other divines, he ſuppoſes clearly by his reflections on this paſſage, and indeed by the whole tenor of his writings, that intelligence and knowledge in God are the ſame as intelligence and knowledge in man; that the divine differs from the human in degrees, not in kind, and that by conſequence if God has not the latter, he has none at all.

Absurd and impertinent vanity! We pronounce our fellow animals to be automates, or we allow them inſtinct, or we

beſtow graciouſly upon them, at the utmoſt ſtretch of liberality, an irrational ſoul, ſomething we know not what, but ſomething that can claim no kindred to the human mind. We ſcorn to admit them into the ſame claſs of intelligence with ourſelves, tho it be obvious, among other obſervations eaſy to be made, and tending to the ſame purpoſe, that the firſt inlets, and the firſt elements of their knowledge, and of ours, are the ſame. But of ourſelves, we think it not too much to boaſt that our intelligence is a participation of the divine intelligence; that the mind of man, like that of God, contains in it the ideas of intelligible natures; that it does not riſe from particular to general knowledge, but deſcends from univerſals to ſingulars; hovers, as it were, aloft over all the corporeal univerſe; is independant of the bodies that compoſe it, or proleptical to them, and in the order of nature before them.

Such wild notions as theſe, or the magic of ſuch unmeaning ſounds, and articulated air, which the warm imaginations of Aſia and Africa firſt produced, have been ecchoed down to the preſent age, and have been propagated with ſo much ſucceſs even in our northern and cold climates, that the heads of many reverend perſons have been turned by a praeternatural fermentation of the brain, or a philoſophical delirium. None has been ſo more, I think, ſince the days of the latter platoniſts, and the reign of the ſchoolmen who may be called properly the latter peripatetics, than that of the divine I have juſt now quoted. He read too much to think enough, he admired too much to think freely, and it is impoſſible to forbear wiſhing that he had taken due notice of a paſſage in Tully's Offices, "Ne ut quidam Graeca verba inculcantes jure optimo "rideamur." Greek phraſeology was in faſhion among the Romans, as well as Greek philoſophy, in Tully's days, and

it is reaſonable to believe that many things paſſed then under a Greek varniſh, that would not have paſſed ſo well in mere Latin; juſt as we may obſerve, that many things have paſſed by the help of Greek and Latin among us, that would not have paſſed ſo well in mere Engliſh. TULLY reformed this pedantry indeed, but he did it rather with a view to enrich his language, than to determine his ideas, and he loſt little or no advantage by the reformation: that advantage I mean which men take, who affect to know more than they do know, from which affectation the academicians, as much as they diſclaimed knowledge, were not free. He invented Latin to anſwer Greek words; and readers, like writers, being apt to imagine that every new word denotes ſomething new, this expedient ſerved well enough to help out a ſyſtem, or to get rid of troubleſome objections. Thus vain phraſeology has been always called in to the aſſiſtance of vain philoſophy, and a learned miſt has been raiſed in order to ſurprize, and impoſe, or to eſcape. Theſe are ſome part of the arguties verbales, againſt which MONTAGNE declaims: and, to ſpeak in his ſtyle, they may ſerve to enrich a man's tongue, but they will leave his underſtanding as poor as they found it, and much more perplexed.

I RETURN to the ſubject immediately before me, and I ſay that, ſince there muſt have been ſomething from eternity, becauſe there is ſomething now, the eternal Being muſt be an intelligent Being, becauſe there is intelligence now, (for no man will venture to aſſert that non-entity can produce entity, or non-intelligence intelligence) and ſuch a Being muſt exiſt neceſſarily, whether things have been always as they are, or whether they have been made in time; becauſe it is no more poſſible to conceive an infinite than a finite progreſſion of effects without a cauſe. Thus the exiſtence of a God is demonſtrated,

monſtrated, and cavil againſt demonſtration is impertinent. It is ſo impertinent, that he who refuſes to ſubmit to this demonſtration, among others of the ſame kind, has but one ſhort ſtep more to make in order to arrive at the higheſt pitch of abſurdity: for ſurely there is but one remove between a denial of the exiſtence of God, and a denial of our own exiſtence; becauſe, if we have an intuitive knowledge of the latter, we have the ſame intuitive knowledge of all thoſe ideas that connect the latter with the former in demonſtrating à poſteriori.

Now if the exiſtence of ſuch a Being can be demonſtrated, the atheiſt and the divine are both defeated. The atheiſt, becauſe the intelligence of this firſt cauſe of all things muſt have preceded all exiſtence, except his own, with which it is coeternal. The divine, becauſe an eſſential difference is eſtabliſhed, in conſequence of this demonſtration, between God's manner of knowing, and that which he has been pleaſed to beſtow on his creatures. Human knowledge is not only poſterior to the human ſyſtem, but the very firſt elements of it are ideas which we perceive impreſſed by outward objects on our minds: and it will avail little to urge that our minds muſt be ſtill independent of outward objects, ſince we not only know what is, but can frame ideas of what may be, tho it is not; becauſe every man who pleaſes may perceive, that all the ideas he frames of what is not are framed by the combinations he makes of his ideas of what is, and in no other manner, nor by any other means whatſoever. Thus then, if we could be ſuppoſed to know that there is an ideal world in the divine intellect, according to which this ſenſible world was made, yet ſtill the difference between the human and divine manner of knowing would admit of no compariſon.

But it was too preſumptuous in Plato to aſſert that the ſupreme Being had need of a plan, like ſome human architect, to conduct the great deſign, when he raiſed the fabric of the univerſe: and it is ſtill more preſumptuous to aſſert not only that the divine intellect is furniſhed with ideas, like the human, and that God reaſons and acts by the help of them, but that your ideas and mine are God's ideas, and that the modifications (for that is the faſhionable term) of our minds are the modifications of God's mind. We talk indeed of the eternal ideas of the divine mind, and allude to our manner of knowing, that we may underſtand ourſelves and be underſtood by others the better, juſt as we are forced very often to employ corporeal images when we ſpeak of the operations of our own minds. But theſe expreſſions, ſo much abuſed by thoſe who are in the delirium of metaphyſical theology, have no intention to be underſtood in a literal ſenſe among men who preſerve their reaſon. If they had, they ſhould never be employed by me, ſince I ſhould think them prophane as well as preſumptuous.

I should think them ſilly too, and mere cant; for as one difference between God's manner of knowing and ours ariſes from what we are able to demonſtrate concerning God, ſo there ariſes another from what we may know if we ſhut our ears to the din of hard words, and turn our attention inwards concerning man, and concerning theſe very ideas. Our knowledge is ſo dependent on our own ſyſtem, that a great part of it would not be knowledge perhaps, but error, in any other. They who held, as I learn from doctor Cudworth that ſome philoſophers did hold, that "ſenſible ideas, and "phantaſmes are impreſſed on the ſoul, as on a dead thing," maintained, no doubt, a great abſurdity. Aristotle's opinion

nion was more conformable to univerſal experience, for he aſſerted, according to SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, that ſenſe was like the inſtrument, and intellect like the artificer; that ſenſe was firſt in the order of mental operations, but that intellect was firſt in dignity. Now this compariſon is juſt enough. We have internal as well as external ſenſe, mental as well as corporeal faculties, and active as well as paſſive powers, if you will allow paſſivity as well as activity to be included in the idea of power. But then, as our ſenſes are few, incapable of giving us much information, and capable of giving it falſely, unleſs we are on our guard againſt their deceptions; ſo the faculties of our minds are weak, and their progreſs towards knowledge not only ſlow, but ſo confined, that they are not able to carry it to the full extent of the ideas, about which they are converſant, and which they have all contributed to frame. We muſt conceive, as well as we can, the knowledge of the ſupreme Being to be immediate, and abſolute. Knowledge in us is mediate by the intervention of ideas, not only as far as ſenſible objects are concerned, and that goes a great way, but in the whole. It is ſuch knowledge as we are fitted by the organization of our bodies, and the conſtitution of our minds to acquire. It is ſuch as reſults from the relation eſtabliſhed between them, and the ſyſtem to which they belong. It is knowledge for us. It is, in one word, human, and relatively to us, when it is rightly purſued, real knowledge.

GENERAL ideas, or notions, ſuch as the mind frames by it's innate powers, ſuch as are ſaid to be architypes, and to refer to nothing beſides themſelves, may ſeem to be materials of axiomatical, ſcientifical, and, in a word, of abſolute, real knowledge. But even this boaſted knowledge is very precarious. Theſe ideas, or notions are not taken with exactneſs from the nature of things on many occaſions, and the ſame

affections, and imperfections of the mind, that corrupt the firſt, corrupt the ſubſequent operations of it. Ideas or notions are ill abſtracted firſt, and ill compared afterwards. The more complex, the more obſcure they are, and the more important, the more liable they are likewiſe to be abuſed by prejudices and habits that infect the mind, and put a wrong bias on it. But further; our progreſſion in this knowledge, ſuch as it is, ſtops always very ſhort of our aim. We ſoon want ideas, or want means of comparing thoſe we have, and it is in vain that we ſtruggle to get forward. It is in vain that we endeavor to force that barrier, which God has oppoſed to our inſatiable curioſity. To what purpoſe, indeed, ſhould we force it, if that was in our power, ſince we have reaſon to acknowledge, with the utmoſt gratitude to the Author of our nature, that every thing neceſſary to our well-being in the ſtate wherein he has placed us lies on the human ſide of this barrier, within that extent, I mean, where the operations of our minds are performed with eaſe and vigor, and are attended with the certainty of knowledge, or the ſufficient probability of opinion? Not only unattainable, but difficult, very often, is a term ſynonymous to unneceſſary; as we might prove, I think, by ſome examples drawn even from mathematical knowledge. In ſhort, the profound meditations of philoſophers, which we are ſo apt to admire before we have thought for ourſelves, have as much regard paid to them as they deſerve, when they are made the amuſements of men of ſenſe and leiſure; when they are uſed as exerciſe, without any other aim than to invigorate, and ſtrengthen the mind, and prepare it for ſomething more conducive to our happineſs, and therefore more properly our buſineſs.

" The

" The good, the juſt, the meet, the wholeſome rules
" Of temperance, and aught that may improve
" The moral life.*"

This ſhort account of human ideas, and human knowledge, no part of which can be applied, without blaſphemy, and abſurdity, to the ſupreme Being, nor be denied, without folly, and effrontery, of the human, is ſufficient, I ſuppoſe, to conſtitute another difference between God's manner of knowing, and ours: a difference ariſing from thoſe imperfections, and limitations of which every man is conſcious.

But it is time now to aſk what then is the preciſe notion we are to entertain of the human mind? Shall we continue to think with ſome philoſophers antient, and modern, that the ſoul, the rational ſoul, for they have given us more than one, is a ſpiritual, and divine ſubſtance, " furniſhed with forms, " and ideas to conceive all things by, and printed over with " the ſeeds of univerſal knowledge, tho the active ener- " gies of it are fatally united to ſome local motions in the " body, and concurrently produced with them by reaſon of " the magical union betwixt the ſoul and the body?" Shall we ſay too, that from this union all the imperfections of the human mind proceed, and that the perfection of our nature is to be quite abſtracted from ſenſation, like the Janguis, or illuminated ſaints of the Indoſtan, whom Bernier mentions? Shall we endeavor, like theſe philoſophers, by intenſeneſs of thought, by faſting and other auſterities, to riſe up to the contemplation of the divinity, whom they aſſure that they ſee like a white, lively, ineffable light? Or ſhall we ſoften theſe pretenſions a little, and embrace the ſyſtem of a modern philo-

* John Phillips.

philoſopher *, who affirms that God is the place of ideas, as ſpace is of body, and that this all perfect mind containing the ideas of all created beings, it is in God alone that we perceive every thing exterior to the ſoul? Shall we aſſume like another philoſopher †, that our ideas are the only real ſenſible things; that we have no reaſon to imagine there are any ſubſtances but active thinking ſubſtances, and that it is abſurd to aſcribe power to bodies, or to ſuppoſe any power but active power, any agent but ſpirit, or any actions of ſpirit without volition?

Who does not ſee all this to be as inconceivable as that which it pretends to explain? Have the authors of ſuch ſyſtems, from Plato down to that fine writer Malebranche, or to that ſublime genius, and good man, the biſhop of Cloyne, contributed to make us better acquainted with ourſelves? I think not. They have done all that human capacity can do in a wrong method; but all they have done has been to vend us poetry for philoſophy, and to multiply ſyſtems of imagination. They have reaſoned about the human mind à priori, have aſſumed that they know the nature of it, and have employed much wit, and eloquence to account for all the phaenomena of it upon theſe aſſumptions. But the nature of it is as much unknown as ever, and we muſt deſpair of having any real knowledge at all about it, unleſs we will content ourſelves with that which is to be acquired, à poſteriori. The mind of man is an object of phyſics, as much as the body of man, or any other body: and the diſtinction that is made between phyſics, and metaphyſics, is quite arbitrary. His mind is part of his nature, as well as his body. Both of them together conſtitute his whole being, and as the firſt is the moſt noble part, I preſume, we ſhould determine his

* Malebranche. † Berkeley.

his ſpecies by it principally, which we do not, if his mind was not more liable than his figure to be confounded with that of other animals. Let us content ourſelves therefore to trace his mind, to obſerve it's growth, and the progreſs it makes from it's infancy to it's maturity. Let us be content with particular, and experimental knowledge, upon which we may found a few general propoſitions, ſuch as are or may be properly called axiomata media. But let us aim no longer at a general knowledge, too remote for our ſearch; nor hope to diſcover more of intellectual nature by internal ſenſe, than we are able to diſcover of corporeal nature by external. All that we can know of one and the other is, that we have ſuch and ſuch ſenſes, and ſuch and ſuch faculties, and that divers ſenſations of the body and operations of the mind are produced in them on ſuch and ſuch apparent occaſions.

SECT. II.

To meaſure rightly our intellectual ſtrength, and to apply it properly, in order neither to impoſe, nor be impoſed upon, is our point of view. I ſhall not, therefore, ſay any thing further about the nature of mind in general, that ſecret ſpring of thought, unknown and unknowable, but ſhall content myſelf to obſerve, in Mr. LOCKE's method and with his aſſiſtance, ſomething about the phaenomena of the human mind, by which we may judge ſurely of the nature, extent, and reality of human knowledge. I ſay, we may judge ſurely of them; becauſe our ideas are the foundations, or the materials, call them which you pleaſe, of all our knowledge; becauſe without entering into an enquiry concerning the origin of them, we may know ſo certainly as to exclude all doubt, what ideas we have; and becauſe, when we know this, we know with

the ſame certainty what kinds, and degrees of knowledge we have, and are capable of having.

Thus we know that the firſt ideas, with which the mind is furniſhed, are received from without, and are cauſed by ſuch ſenſations, as the preſence of external objects excites in us, according to laws of paſſion and action, which the Creator has eſtabliſhed. What theſe laws are, and how external objects become able to make ſuch impreſſions on our organs, we know as little, and it is impoſſible to know any thing leſs, as thoſe philoſophers do, who have pretended, moſt extravagantly, to explain theſe laws, and to account for theſe impreſſions; or as thoſe philoſophers know of another ſyſtem, who denying, as extravagantly, that any ſuch power can belong to body, and affirming that it is abſurd to talk of paſſive power, confine all activity and aſcribe all ſuch ideas of ſenſation to ſpirit alone. We are far from knowing how body acts on body, or ſpirit on ſpirit; how body operates on mind, and produces thought, or how mind operates on body, and produces corporeal motion. But this I know, that a leaf of wormwood conveys to my mind, by the ſenſe of ſight, and that of touch, for inſtance, the ideas of color, extenſion, figure, and ſolidity, as certainly as I know that it conveys thither, by the ſenſe of taſte, the idea of bitter; and as certainly as I know that the act of my mind, called volition, produced the motion of my hand which gathered the leaf. Our ignorance of cauſes does not hinder our knowledge of effects. This knowledge has been thought ſufficient for us, in theſe caſes, by infinite wiſdom: and nothing can be more ridiculous than to hear men affirm dogmatically, when they gueſs at moſt, and that very wildly, and very precariouſly.

As

As theſe ideas come to us from without, ſo there are others that ariſe in the mind, and proceed from the perception of it's own operations, to which a ſtill greater number is to be added, that ariſe there from the concurrence of theſe joint cauſes, from perceptions of outward and inward operations, from external, and internal ſenſe. Perception is the firſt faculty the mind exerts, and is common, whatever ſome of the others may be, to us and to the whole animal kind. The faculties that come in play afterwards ſeem to be active, but this ſeems to be paſſive; for we perceive ideas, however raiſed in the mind, whether we will or no: their eſſe is percipi, to have them we muſt perceive that we have them. Without this paſſive power, or this faculty, external objects might act upon us, but they would act to little purpoſe, for they would excite no ideas: as, on the other hand, without this action of external objects, the power or faculty of perception would be uſeleſs, or rather null, and by conſequence all the other powers or faculties of the mind.

THERE is nothing, philoſophically ſpeaking, at leaſt I could never find, to my ſorrow, that there is any thing, which obliges us neceſſarily to conclude that we are a compound of material, and immaterial ſubſtance. If we are ſo, contrary to all appearances, (for they denote plainly one ſingle ſyſtem, all the parts of which are ſo intimately connected, and dependent one on another, that the whole begins, proceeds, and ends together) this union of a body and a ſoul muſt be magical indeed, as doctor CUDWORTH calls it. So magical, that the hypotheſis ſerves to no purpoſe in philoſophy, whatever it may do in theology, and is ſtill leſs comprehenſible than the hypotheſis which aſſumes that, altho our idea of thought be not included in the idea of matter, or body, as the idea of figure is, for inſtance,

in that of limited extenſion, yet the faculty of thinking, in all the modes of thought, may have been ſuperadded by omnipotence to certain ſyſtems of matter; which it is not leſs than blaſphemy to deny, tho divines and philoſophers, who deny it in terms, may be cited, and which, whether it be true or no, will never be proved falſe by a little metaphyſical jargon about eſſences, and attributes, and modes.

But however this may be, concerning which it becomes men little to be as dogmatical as they are on one ſide of this queſtion at leaſt, and whatever ſtrength and vigor, independent on the body, may be aſcribed to the ſoul, the ſoul exerts none till it is rouſed into activity by ſenſe. A jog, a knock, a thruſt from without is not knowledge *. No. But, if we did not perceive theſe jogs, knocks, and thruſts from without, we ſhould remain juſt as we came into the world, void even of the firſt elements of knowledge. Not only the inward, active powers of the mind would be unemployed, but we may ſay, that they would be non-exiſtent. The human ſoul is ſo far from being furniſhed with forms and ideas to perceive all things by, or from being impregnated, I would rather ſay than printed over, with the ſeeds of univerſal knowledge, that we have no ideas till we receive paſſively the ideas of ſenſible qualities from without. Then indeed the activity of the ſoul, or mind commences, and another ſource of original ideas is opened: for then we acquire ideas from, and by the operations of our minds. Senſation would be of little uſe to form the underſtanding, if we had no other faculty than mere paſſive perception; but without ſenſation theſe other faculties would have nothing to operate upon, reflection would have by conſequence nothing to reflect upon, and it is by reflection that we multiply our ſtock of ideas, and fill that magazine, which

* Cudworth,

which is to furniſh all the materials of future knowledge. In this manner, and in no other we may ſay, that "all our ideas "ariſe from our ſenſes, and that there is nothing in the mind "which was not previouſly in ſenſe." But theſe propoſitions ſhould not be advanced, perhaps, as generally as they are ſometimes by logicians, leſt they ſhould lead into error, as maxims are apt to do very often. Senſation is the greater, reflection the ſmaller ſource of ideas. But theſe latter are as clear, and diſtinct, and convey knowledge that may be ſaid to be more real than the former. Senſe gave occaſion to them, but they never were in ſenſe properly ſpeaking. They are, if I may ſay ſo, of the mind's own growth, the elements of knowledge, more immediate, leſs relative, and leſs dependent than ſenſitive knowledge, as any man will be apt to think, who compares his ideas of remembering, recollecting, bare thought, and intenſeneſs of thought, with thoſe of warm and hot, of cool and cold. DES CARTES might have ſaid, "I ſee, I "hear, I feel, I taſte, I ſmell; therefore I am." But ſurely he might ſay too, "I think, I reflect, I will; therefore I am." Let us obſerve, however, that it belongs only to a great philoſopher to frame an argument to prove to himſelf that he exiſts, which is an object of intuitive knowledge, and concerning which it is impoſſible he ſhould have any doubt. In the mouth of any other perſon, "I think, therefore I am," would be very near akin to I am, therefore I am *.

THUS it will appear when we contemplate our underſtanding in the firſt ſteps towards knowledge, that corporeal, animal ſenſe, which ſome philoſophers hold in great contempt, and which

* Je ne vois pas que vous ayez eu beſoin d'un ſi grand appareil, puiſque d'ailleurs vous etiez deja certain de votre exiſtence, et que vous pouviez inferer la même choſe de quelque autre que ce fut de vos actions, etant manifeſte par la lumiere naturelle que tout ce qui agit eſt, ou exiſte.
Objec. of GASSENDI to the ſecond Medit.

which does not deſerve much eſteem, communicates to us our firſt ideas, ſets the mind firſt to work, and becomes, in conjunction with internal ſenſe, by which we perceive what paſſes within, as by the other what paſſes without us, the foundation of all our knowledge. This is ſo evidently true, that even thoſe ideas, about which our reaſon is employed in the moſt abſtract meditations, may be traced back to this original by a very eaſy analyſe. Since theſe ſimple ideas therefore are the foundations of human knowledge, this knowledge can neither be extended wider, nor elevated higher than in a certain proportion to them. If we conſider theſe ideas like foundations, they are extremely narrow, and ſhallow, neither reaching to many things, nor laid deep in the nature of any. If we conſider them like materials, for ſo they may be conſidered likewiſe, employed to raiſe the fabric of our intellectual ſyſtem, they will appear like mud, and ſtraw, and lath, materials fit to erect ſome frail, and homely cottage, but not of ſubſtance, nor value ſufficient for the conſtruction of thoſe enormous piles, from whoſe lofty towers philoſophers would perſuade us that they diſcover all nature ſubject to their inſpection, that they pry into the ſource of all being, and into the inmoſt receſſes of all wiſdom. But it fares with them, as it did with the builders in the plains of Senaar, they fall into a confuſion of languages, and neither underſtand one another, nor are underſtood by the reſt of mankind.

HAVING taken this view of our firſt, and ſimple ideas, it is neceſſary, in order to make a true eſtimate of human knowledge, that we take ſuch a view likewiſe of thoſe faculties by the exerciſe of which our minds proceed in acquiring knowledge. I have mentioned perception; and retention, or memory ought to follow: for as we ſhould have no ideas without perception, ſo we ſhould loſe them, as faſt as we get them, without

without retention. When it was objected to Des Cartes that, if thought was the eſſence of the ſoul, the ſoul of the child muſt think in the mother's womb; and when he was aſked, how then it came to paſs that we remember none of thoſe thoughts? He maintained, according to his uſual method, one hypotheſis by another, and aſſumed that memory conſiſts in certain traces made on the brain by the thoughts that paſs through it, and that as long as they laſt we remember, but that the brain of the child in the womb being too moiſt, and too ſoft to preſerve theſe traces, it is impoſſible he ſhould remember out of the womb what he thought in it. Thus memory ſeems to be made purely corporeal by the ſame philoſopher, who makes it on ſome occaſions purely intellectual. He might diſtinguiſh two memories by the ſame hypothetical power, by which he diſtinguiſhed two ſubſtances, that he might employ one or the other as his ſyſtem required. If you conſult other philoſophers on the ſame ſubject, you will receive no more ſatisfaction: and the only reaſonable method we can take, is to be content to know intuitively, and by inward obſervation, not the cauſe, but the effects of memory, and the uſe of it in the intellectual ſyſtem.

By this faculty then, whatever it be, our ſimple ideas, which have been ſpoken of already, are preſerved with greater, and our complex ideas, which remain to be ſpoken of, with leſs facility. Both one and the other require to be frequently raiſed in the mind, and frequently recalled to it. I ſay, with the reſt of the world, to be raiſed, and to be recalled; but ſurely theſe words come very ſhort of expreſſing the wonderful phaenomena of memory. The images that are lodged in it preſent themſelves often to the mind without any freſh ſenſation, and ſo ſpontaneouſly, that the mind ſeems as paſſive in theſe ſecondary perceptions, as it was in receiving the firſt impreſſions. Our ſimple ideas, and

even our complex ideas, and notions return ſometimes of themſelves, we know not why, nor how, mechanically, as it were, uncalled by the mind, and often to the diſturbance of it in the purſuit of other ideas, to which theſe intruders are foreign. On the other hand, we are able, at our will and with deſign, to put a ſort of force on memory, to ſeize, as it were, the end of ſome particular line, and to draw back into the mind, a whole ſet of ideas that ſeem to be ſtrung to it, or linked one with the other. In general; when images, eſſences, ideas, notions, that exiſted in any mind, are gone out of it, and have no longer any exiſtence there, the mind is often able to will them into exiſtence again, by an act of which we are conſcious, but of which we know nothing more, than that the mind performs it. Theſe phaenomena are more ſurprizing, and leſs to be accounted for than the action of external objects on the organs of ſenſe in the firſt production of ideas, which is an obſervation that deſerves the notice of thoſe philoſophers who deny ſuch action becauſe they cannot comprehend it.

But ſtill this faculty is proportioned to our imperfect nature, and therefore weak, ſlow, and uncertain in it's operations. Our ſimple ideas fade in the mind, or fleet out of it, unleſs they are frequently renewed: and the moſt tenacious memory cannot maintain ſuch as are very complex, without the greateſt attention, and a conſtant care, nor always with both. All our ideas in general are recalled ſlowly by ſome, and ſucceſſively by every mind. Themistocles was famous, among other parts wherein he excelled, for his memory, but when he refuſed the offer Simonides made him, it was, I ſuppoſe, becauſe he did not want the poet's ſkill to improve his memory, and becauſe he knew by experience, that the great defects of this faculty are neither to be cured, nor ſupplied by art. In what proportion ſoever it is given, it may be improved to

ſome degree, no doubt, but memory will never preſent ideas to the human mind, as it does perhaps to ſuperior intelligences, like objects in a mirror, where they may be viewed at every inſtant, all at once, without effort or toil, in their original freſhneſs, and with their original preciſion, ſuch as they were when they firſt came into the mind, or when they were firſt framed by it. Could memory ſerve us in this manner, our knowledge would be ſtill very imperfect; but many errors into which we fall, and into which we are ſeduced, would be avoided, and the endleſs chicane of learned diſputation would be ſtopped in a great meaſure. It is for this reaſon I have ſaid ſo much of this faculty of the mind, as you will have occaſion ſoon to obſerve.

The faculties, neceſſary for my purpoſe to be mentioned next, are thoſe of compounding ſimple into complex ideas, and of comparing our ideas, which implies the juſt and nice diſcernment of them, in order to perceive the innumerable relations which they bear to one another. Theſe are ſome of the ſteps by which the mind attempts to riſe from particular to general knowledge. They have been called arts of the mind, but improperly, in ſome reſpects; for tho the mind is forced to employ ſeveral arts, and to call in ſenſe to the aid of intellect, even after it has full poſſeſſion of it's ideas, to help out it's imperfect manner of knowing, and to lengthen a little it's ſhort tether; yet the compoſition, and compariſon of ideas is plainly a leſſon of nature: this leſſon is taught us by the very firſt ſenſations we have. As the mind does not act till it is rouzed into action by external objects; ſo when it does act, it acts conformably to the ſuggeſtions it receives from theſe impreſſions, and takes with it's firſt ideas the hints how to multiply, and improve them. If nature makes us lame, ſhe gives crutches to lean upon. She helps us to walk where we

cannot run, and to hobble where we cannot walk. She takes us by the hand, and leads us by experience to art.

NATURE then has united in diſtinct ſubſtances, as we commonly ſpeak, various combinations of thoſe qualities, each of which cauſes in us the ſenſation it is appropriated to cauſe, and our organs are fitted to receive; ſo that ſeveral being thus combined, and making their impreſſion together, may be ſaid to cauſe a complex ſenſation. Thus we receive, among other ideas, thoſe of ſoft and warm at the ſame inſtant, from the ſame piece of wax; or of hard and cold from the ſame piece of ice. Thus again; we receive the more complex ideas which ſubſtances ſtill more compoſed, that is, ſubſtances wherein a greater variety of theſe qualities co-exiſts, are fitted to raiſe in us, ſuch, for inſtance, as the idea of a man, or an horſe. As ſoon as we are born, various appearances preſent themſelves to the ſight, the din of the world ſtrikes our ears, in ſhort a multitude of impreſſions made on the tender organs of ſenſe convey a multitude of ideas ſimple and complex, confuſedly, and continually into the mind. The latter indeed, whether nature obtrudes them, or we make them, are compoſed of the former, and therefore we give very properly the firſt place to theſe in all diſcourſes concerning ideas. But they have a priority of order rather than of exiſtence; for the complex idea of the nurſe comes into the mind as ſoon as the eyes of the child are opened, and is moſt probably the firſt idea received by the ſight, tho the ſimple idea produced by the taſte of milk may have got into the mind a little ſooner. Nor does the leſſon of nature end here: ſhe carries it on to all the different compoſitions of our ſimple ideas, and to all the different combinations we frame of our ſimple, and complex ideas; from ſubſtances to modes, the dependencies, and affections of ſubſtances, and from them to the relations of things one to another;

another; that is, ſhe carries it on to all the operations of the mind, and to all the objects of our thoughts in the acquiſition of knowledge.

If I meaned by modes nothing but manners of being, as ſome do, I ſhould not aſcribe our ideas of them to a further leſſon of nature. She taught us this leſſon, when ſhe obtruded on us the complex ideas of ſubſtances. At leaſt it ſeems ſo to me, who cannot comprehend the diſtinction of ſubſtances, and of mode or manner of being, as of two ideas that may be perceived ſeparately, the one of a thing that ſubſiſts by itſelf, the other of a manner of being which cannot ſubſiſt by itſelf, but determines this thing to be what it is. I cannot conſider a mode without referring it in my mind to ſomething, of which it is or may be the mode: neither can I conſider a ſubſtance otherwiſe than relatively to it's modes, as ſomething whereof I have no idea, and in which the modes, of which I have ideas, ſubſiſt. The complex idea we have, of every ſubſtance, is nothing more than a combination of ſeveral ſenſible ideas which determine the apparent nature of it to us. I ſay the apparent nature, and to us; for I cannot agree that theſe modes, ſuch of them as fall under our obſervation, limit the real nature, or determine even the apparent nature to other beings. On the whole it will appear, whenever we conſider this matter further, that the far greateſt part of what has been ſaid by philoſophers about Being, and ſubſtance, indeed all they have advanced beyond thoſe clear and obvious notions which every thinking man frames, or may frame without their help, is pure jargon, or elſe ſomething very trite, diſguiſed under a metaphyſical maſk, and called by an hard name ontology, or ontoſophy.

But to proceed, or rather to return; I underſtand by mode,

in this place ſomething elſe, ſomething that carries our knowledge further than the complex ideas of ſubſtances. I underſtand in ſhort what Mr. Locke underſtands by ſimple and mixed modes. The various combinatious that our minds make of the ſame ſimple idea, and the various compoſitions that they make of ſimple ideas of different kinds. Theſe ideas added to thoſe of ſubſtances, and the whole ſtock compleated by ſuch as the mind acquires of the relations of it's ideas, in comparing them as far as it is able to compare them, make up the entire ſyſtem of human knowledge: and in the proceſs of it from firſt to laſt, we are aſſiſted directly or indirectly by the leſſons of nature that have been, or that are to be mentioned.

Ideas of things computable, and meaſurable are the objects of mathematics. Ideas of moral, and immoral actions are the objects of ethics. From whence has the mathematician his firſt ideas of number, or his firſt ideas of ſolid extenſion, of lines, ſurfaces, and figures? From whence has the moraliſt his firſt ideas of happineſs, and unhappineſs, of good, and evil? The mind can exerciſe a power, in ſome ſort arbitrary, over all it's ſimple ideas, that is, it can repeat them at it's pleaſure, and it can frame them into complex ideas, without any regard to actual, tho with a regard to poſſible exiſtence; which regard will be always preſerved, unleſs the mind be diſordered. The mind then has a power of framing all the different compoſitions, and combinations of ideas about which theſe ſciences are converſant; but yet theſe operations are not performed by the native energy of the mind alone, without any help, without any pattern. Nature lends the help, nature ſets the pattern, when complex ideas of theſe modes and relations force themſelves on the mind, as the complex ideas of ſubſtances do.

That

That every diſtinct object of external, and internal ſenſe gives us the idea of an unit, or of one, is obvious to reflection: and I think it is no leſs obvious, that theſe objects ſuggeſt to the mind, nay oblige the mind to make various repetitions of this idea, and to frame all the ſimple modes of number by adding unit to unit. Thus for inſtance, we look up by day and we ſee one ſun, by night and we ſee one moon. Plutarch's countryman, indeed, counted two moons; for he could not conceive that the moon he had left behind him in Boeotia, and that he ſaw at Athens, were the ſame. But tho we ſee but one ſun, and one moon, we ſee many ſtars. We attempt to count them, that is, we aſſign marks, or ſounds to ſignify how many times we repeat the idea of an unit, which each of them gives us ſeparately; or elſe we form a confuſed idea of numberleſs repetitions of this idea, like the ſavages who lift up both hands, and extend their fingers to ſhew that they have ſeen ten ſuns on their journey, or hold out an handful of their hair when they want to ſignify a number of ſuns which they cannot ſignify otherwiſe; becauſe they have neither ſounds, nor marks for the greater collections of units.

As arithmetic is one, ſo is geometry another conſtituent part of mathematics, and the very name points out to us, not only the objects, but the original of this ſcience. I do not believe, on the word of Herodotus, nor even of Strabo, that the Egyptians were the inventors of it. I believe this, almoſt as little, as I believe on the word of Josephus, that antideluvian aſtronomers had engraved their obſervations on two pillars which exiſted in his time. But this tradition, whereby the invention of geometry is aſcribed to a nation more antient than tradition itſelf, tho it may be fabulous, communicates to us, like

like many others that are ſo, a true fact. The true fact, I think, is this; that as ſoon as men ceaſed to range the woods, and plains in common, like their fellow animals, if they ever did ſo; as ſoon as ſocieties were formed, and in thoſe ſocieties a diviſion of property was made; nature that led them to aſſign, led them to aſcertain poſſeſſions. They did both, moſt probably, at firſt by ſight, and gueſs. They paced out theſe poſſeſſions afterwards in length, and breadth; and ideas of modes of ſpace were framed like ideas of modes of number: an unit twelve times repeated makes a dozen, twenty times repeated it makes a ſcore. The length of one of their feet was, to theſe firſt geometricians, like an unit to the firſt arithmeticians. So many feet, five, I think, according to PLINY, made a pace, and one hundred and five and twenty of theſe made a ſtated meaſure of diſtance that continued long in uſe; for the ſtadium conſiſted of one hundred and twenty-five paces, according to the ſame author. Thus meaſuring, the practical part of geometry, came into uſe: and when it had been applied to two dimenſions, it was ſoon applied to all three. The uſe of it was great, not only in the firſt diſtribution of property, but in every alteration of it, and eſpecially after ſuch confuſions of it, as the inundations of the Nile might cauſe annually in Egypt, or other devaſtations in that and in other countries.

NATURE that urged men, by neceſſity, to invention, helped them to invent. The natural face of a country taught them to give it an artificial face, and their own firſt rude eſſays in laying out lands, and building habitations, led them to contemplate the properties of lines, ſurfaces, and ſolids; and, little by little, to form that ſcience, the pride of the human intellect, which has ſerved to ſo many great and good purpoſes, and the application of which is grown, or growing perhaps,

haps, into ſome abuſe. Nature ſet the example, example begot imitation, imitation practice, practice introduced ſpeculation, and ſpeculation in it's turn improved practice. I might eaſily run through other examples of the ſame kind, to ſhew how the firſt principles of arts and ſciences are derived from ideas furniſhed by the productions, and operations of nature, ſuch as our ſenſes repreſent them to us; nay, how inſtinct inſtructs reaſon, the inſtinct of other animals the reaſon of man. But this would be ſuperfluous trouble in writing to you, who have touched this ſubject ſo well, where you introduce nature ſpeaking to man, in the third of your ethic epiſtles.

I WILL only mention, as I propoſed to do, the ideas, or notions, about which moral philoſophy is converſant. I diſtinguiſh here, which I ſhould have done perhaps ſooner, and I think with good reaſon, between ideas, and notions; for it ſeems to me, that as we compound ſimple into complex ideas, ſo the compoſitions we make of ſimple, and complex ideas may be called, more properly, and with leſs confuſion and ambiguity, notions. Simple ideas, ſimple modes, complex ideas, mixed modes, and relations of all theſe, as well as the relations of the relations, are frequently blended together voluntarily, as uſe invites, or judgment directs; and, thus blended, they may therefore ſeem to be original, and untaught. But yet certain it is, that ſuch notions as theſe obtrude themſelves on the mind, as naturally and as neceſſarily, tho not ſo directly nor immediately, as the complex ideas of ſubſtances, or any other complex ideas. Let us obſerve this in an example. We ſee one man kill another: and the complex idea, ſignified by the word kill, is obtruded on our ſenſe as much as the complex idea of the man killed, or of his killer. The mind retains this image, and joining to it various ideas of circumſtances and relations of cauſes, and effects, of motives

tives and conſequences, all which ideas have been raiſed in our minds by experience and obſervation, ſuch notions as we intend by the words murder, aſſaſſination, parricide, or fratricide are framed.

Nature teaches us, by experience and obſervation, not only to extend our notions, but to diſtinguiſh them with greater preciſion, juſt as we learn to rectify ſimple ideas of ſenſation, and to controul ſenſe by ſenſe, if I may ſay ſo. Mr. Locke obſerves, that we learn firſt the names of theſe complex ideas and notions from other men, and the ſignification of them afterwards. Which is true, and it is the moſt early, and moſt common method whereby we acquire them. But this makes no alteration in the caſe. Whether the impreſſions that excited theſe complex ideas, and gave the mind occaſion and means to form theſe notions, were made on our minds, or on the minds of other men; and whether the names that ſignify them were given by us, or by others, it is plain that nature taught mankind to make them, directly when ſhe obtruded them, and indirectly when we ſeemed to invent them without any aſſiſtance from outward objects. The firſt is evident of itſelf, and the ſecond will appear ſo too, if we conſider that in learning their names, and the ſignification of theſe names, we learned to decompound them; and that by learning to decompound ſome, the mind was inſtructed to compound others, even ſuch, perhaps, as exiſted by theſe means in idea and notion, before the combinations, whereof they became the architypes, exiſted in act. Our ideas of relations, and of the relations of relations which are comprehended ſo often in our complex ideas, or notions, are not poſitive beings that exiſt by themſelves, and can be contemplated by themſelves. Modes are the affections and dependencies of ſubſtances; relations are the affections and dependencies of ſubſtances and modes; and

no one of them can exiſt any longer than both the ideas that produced it, or by the compariſon of which it was framed, ſubſiſt. It might ſeem therefore the leſs likely, that outward objects ſhould communicate ſuch ideas to the mind, or even inſtruct the mind to frame them; and yet ſo it is. That act of the mind that ſets two objects before our internal ſight, and by referring from one to the other includes both in the ſame conſideration, is plainly ſuggeſted to us by the operations of outward objects on our ſenſes. We can neither look up, nor down without perceiving ideas of bigger and leſs, of more and fewer, of brighter and darker, and a multitude of other relations, the ideas of which ariſe in the mind as faſt as the ideas of things of which they expreſs the relations, and almoſt prevent reflection. When the mind, thus taught, employs reflection, the number of theſe relative ideas increaſes vaſtly. Thus for inſtance, when we obſerve the alterations that are made by nature, or by art, in our complex ideas of ſubſtances, or when we reflect on the continual viciſſitude and flux of all the affections, and paſſions, and the conſequences of them, how can we avoid framing the ideas of cauſe and effect? That which produces, or ſeems to us to produce the alteration gives us the idea of cauſe, and that which receives the alteration gives us the idea of effect. I go no further into the conſideration of our ideas of relations phyſical, and moral. They are numberleſs, and they muſt needs be ſo; ſince every idea, or notion we have, though it be in itſelf one ſingle object of thought, becomes the object of a thouſand when it is compared with all thoſe with which it may be compared in ſome reſpect or other.

SECT. III.

These, and ſuch as theſe are all the ideas we have really, and are capable of having, derived originally from ſenſe, external and internal. Theſe too, and ſuch as theſe are the faculties by which we improve and increaſe our ſtock, and ſuch as all theſe are, ſuch muſt our knowledge be; for ſince human knowledge is nothing elſe than the perception of the agreement or diſagreement, connection or repugnancy of our ideas, thoſe that are ſimple muſt determine the nature of of thoſe that are complex; thoſe that are complex that of our notions; our notions that of the principles we eſtabliſh, and that of the principles we eſtabliſh that of all the conſequences we draw from them. Error, in any one ſtep of this gradation, begets error in all that follow: and tho we compare ever ſo exactly, conclude ever ſo truly, and in a word reaſon ever ſo well, our reaſoning muſt terminate in error whenever this happens. It cannot terminate in knowledge. But before I leave this ſubject, I muſt go over it again, that I may carry the reflections upon it further.

How inadequate our ideas are to the nature of outward objects, and how imperfect therefore all our knowledge is concerning them, has been obſerved tranſiently above, and has been too often and too well explained to be over much inſiſted on by me. That there are ſuch objects, material objects, neither ſpirits nor ideas, and that they act on one another and on us in various manners, and according to various laws, no man can doubt, any more than he can doubt of that perception by which he diſtinguiſhes their preſence and their abſence, according to the difference between the ideas they excite in one caſe, and thoſe he retains in the other. We can

doubt of this, I think, no more than we can doubt whether we are free agents, or whether we are neceſſarily determined to all we do; no more than we can doubt of many other things of which philoſophers have pretended to doubt, or have really doubted: for either, they have meaned on many occaſions to exerciſe their wit, and to triumph in the ſubtilty of their genius, or they have been tranſported by over-heated imaginations into a philoſophical delirium. The firſt have perplexed knowledge more than they have improved it: and if the laſt have not made many converts, whilſt they have argued againſt ſelf-evidence, they have multiplied uſeleſs diſputes, and miſpent much time.

Here then, at our firſt ſetting out in the ſurvey of knowledge, we find an immenſe field in which we cannot range, no nor ſo much as enter beyond the out-ſkirts of it: the reſt is impenetrable to us, and affords not a ſingle path to conduct us forward. Could we range in that field, we ſhould be unable to walk in our own. I mean, that if our ſenſes were able to diſcover to us the inmoſt conſtitutions, and the real eſſences of outward objects, ſuch ſenſes would render us unfit to live, and act in the ſyſtem to which we belong. If the ſyſtem was not made for us, who pretend on very weak grounds, I think, to be the final cauſe of it, we at leaſt were made for the ſyſtem, and for the part we bear, among terreſtrial animals. Other creatures there may be, and I believe readily there are, who have finer ſenſes than men, as well as ſuperior intelligence to apply and improve the ideas they receive by ſenſation. The inmoſt conſtitutions, the real eſſences of all the bodies that ſurround them, may lie conſtantly open to ſuch creatures; or they may be able, which is a greater advantage ſtill, ſo "to frame, and ſhape to themſelves organs of ſenſation, "as to ſuit them to their preſent deſign, and the circumſtances

" of the object they would conſider," according to that ſuppoſition which Mr. LOCKE calls an extravagant conjecture of his, but which that great man might very reaſonably make; ſince it aſſumes no more than this, that ſome other creatures are able to do by their natural conſtitution, and ſo as to obtain full and abſolute knowledge, what we are able to do by art very imperfectly, and yet ſo as to attain a greater degree of partial and relative knowledge than our ſenſes, unaſſiſted by art, could communicate to us.

BUT be this as it will, concerning which we can only gueſs; it is, I think, evident, that altho outward objects make impreſſions on the organs of ſenſe, and may be ſaid therefore to cauſe ſenſations, yet theſe ſenſations are determined in the whole animal kind that we know, and to which we belong, according to the conſtitutions of the ſeveral ſpecies, as theſe conſtitutions are framed according to the uſes and ends for which each ſpecies is deſigned, and to which it is directed. Innumerable inſtances might be brought to illuſtrate, and confirm this truth. It will be ſufficient to do ſo by making a few ſhort obſervations on our own ſpecies alone. The ſame outward objects then produce the ſame ſenſations in all men, as far as ſelf-preſervation is immediately concerned: and there is at leaſt an apparent uniformity of ſenſations in all other caſes, ſufficient to maintain the commerce of men one with another, to direct their mutual offices without confuſion, and to anſwer all the ends of ſociety. Further than to theſe purpoſes, the determination of their ſenſations does not ſeem to be in all men the ſame. The ſame objects ſeem to cauſe different, and oppoſite ſenſations in many particular inſtances, in as much as they give pleaſure, and excite deſire in one man, whilſt they give no pleaſure, nor excite any deſire, nay whilſt they give pain, and provoke averſion in another. All men feel alike the

effects of fire that burns, or of ſteel that divides their fleſh: and my butler, who has taſted both, will no tbring me a bottle of wormwood-wine when I aſk for a bottle of ſack. But yet the Greenlander quaffs his bowl of whale's-greaſe with as much pleaſure as you and I drink our bowl of punch: and if his liquor appears nauſeous to us, ours appears ſo to him. Habit, that ſecond nature, may ſometimes account, as well as ſickneſs, for this difference that ſeems to be in human ſenſations. But ſtill it will remain true, that this difference in many, and various inſtances, proceeds from our firſt nature, if I may ſay ſo; that is, from a difference in the original conſtitution of thoſe particular bodies in which this apparent difference of ſenſation is perceivable. The principle of this diverſity is as unknown to us as the more general principle of uniformity; but whether it be laid in the natural conſtitution, or in the alterations that habit or ſickneſs may produce, our obſervation will be verified, that human ſenſations are determined by the actual diſpoſition, whether original or accidental, of human bodies, and cannot therefore help to communicate to us any knowledge of the inward conſtitutions, or real eſſences of the bodies which excite them, nor indeed any knowledge but of themſelves. To diſcover in what manner, and by what powers, external action and internal paſſion co-operate to produce ſenſation, it is in vain to attempt: and a philoſophical mind will be much better employed in admiring and adoring the divine wiſdom that appears equally in the diverſity, and in the uniformity of our ſenſations, as it would not be hard to ſhew if this was a place for thoſe reflections, than in ſuch vain reſearches. Vain indeed they will appear to be to any man of ſenſe, who conſiders with attention and without pre-poſſeſſion, what has been writ on this ſubject by men of the greateſt genius.

But as vain as theſe reſearches are, and as impoſſible as it is to know more of our ſenſations than that we have them, and that we receive them from outward objects, yet are we not to think the uſe of our ſenſes as limited, as Malebranche would have us believe it to be. They were given *, he ſays, for the preſervation of our bodies, and not to teach us truth. The firſt part of this aſſertion is agreeable to the ſyſtem of nature. The latter, is agreeable, I think, to no ſyſtem but that of his own imagining, which is ſo extravagantly hypothetical in many, and the principal parts, that it has made no great fortune in the world, tho the utmoſt ſubtilty of wit, and all the powers of language are employed to ſupport it. Notwithſtanding, therefore, ſuch ſyſtems as theſe, for it is not ſingle of it's kind, we may continue to believe what conſtant experience dictates to us, that our ſenſes, tho few, confined, and fallible, are given not only for the preſervation of our bodies, but to let into the human mind the firſt elements of knowledge, and to aſſiſt, and direct the mind in all the progreſs it makes afterwards.

That human knowledge is relative, not abſolute, has been ſaid already. We neither do, nor can know the real eſſence of any one ſubſtance in the world, not of our own: and when we talk of the powers, and qualities, and ſometimes of the natures of ſubſtances, either we talk ignorantly, or we refer to their effects, by which alone we diſtinguiſh them, and in which alone we know any thing of them. They who diſtinguiſh between the primary, and ſecondary qualities of ſubſtances, do not ſo much as pretend that the ſecondary qualities, ſuch as colors, or taſtes for inſtance, are any repreſentations of the outward exiſtences that cauſe them: and the diſputes about ſolidity,

* Recherche de la verité. L. 1. c. 10.

ſolidity, extenſion, and motion which is mobility in action, as mobility is motion in power, ſhew how inadequate our ideas are of the primary qualities; tho theſe are ſaid to be reſemblances of patterns really exiſting in all bodies whether we perceive them or not.

But tho the knowledge here ſpoken of be not complete, nor abſolute, becauſe our ideas, concerning which alone human knowledge is converſant, are inadequate to the nature of things; yet is it real knowledge in ſome degree, and relatively to us. This I mean. Our ſimple ideas, whoſe various co-exiſtencies compoſe all our complex ideas of ſubſtances, are certainly adequate in this ſenſe; they are real effects of real powers, and ſuch as the all-wiſe author of nature has ordained theſe powers to produce in us. I ſay in us, for it is not incongruous to ſuppoſe, nor will theſe ideas be leſs adequate, nor this knowledge leſs real, if it be ſo that the ſame powers may be ordained to produce other effects on other creatures of God. This paper gives me the idea that I call white, it may give ſome other idea to ſome other creature. Theſe ideas are different, but they are both adequate to our uſe, and the knowledge real; for they are both real, and natural effects of real, correſponding powers.

As low as theſe principles, of any real knowledge that we can acquire of ſubſtances, are laid, it is from them we muſt take our riſe: and there is no wonder therefore if we proceed ſlowly, and have not been able to proceed far even ſince the ſtudy of nature has been purſued in a right method. Whilſt the ſymbolical phyſics of pythogoreans and platoniſts prevailed, and whilſt natural philoſophy was made to conſiſt in little elſe than a logical cant, which Aristotle invented, and his diſciples propagated, error was cultivated inſtead of

ſcience,

ſcience, ignorance was maſked, and men paſſed for naturaliſts without any knowledge of nature. The caſe would be much the ſame if ſome modern philoſophers could have ſucceeded in eſtabliſhing a ſuppoſed ſcience that they call metaphyſics, to be like an higher ground from which we might deſcend to phyſics, from generals to particulars, from ſpeculations about what may be, down to affirmations about what is. But there have been men ſince the reſurrection of letters, at the head of whom our Verulam juſtly claims his place, who have delivered common ſenſe from the chains of authority, and by expoſing antient, have put us on our guard againſt many of thoſe modern whimſies. The generality of philoſophers, therefore, have been far from adopting this inverted rule, this unnatural method of ſtudying nature. They have ſeen not only that laborious induſtry is the price impoſed on all our acquiſitions of knowledge, but that natural knowledge, the knowledge, I ſhould ſay, of the ſyſtem of nature can never be real, unleſs it be begun, and carried on by the painful drudgery of experiment. Extunditur uſu.

By experiments well made, for they too may be made ill, theſe men have acquired a knowledge of ſome particular ſubſtances, of thoſe at leaſt which are neareſt to them, which they can handle, and even torture at their pleaſure, and force, if I may ſay ſo, to give them information. The knowledge I mean is that of the ſenſible qualities and powers co-exiſting in each particular ſubſtance: and this is real knowledge as far as it goes, according to what has been explained above. When a multitude of particular ſubſtances are thus known, and thus diſtinguiſhed, philoſophers venture to frame general propoſitions concerning them, and concerning others too, by the help of analogy: and when the propoſitions, and the concluſions drawn from them are confirmed by uniform

form experience, they acquire a probability almoſt equivalent to certainty, and which muſt be accepted for it. This, however, is not ſtrictly knowledge. The naturaliſt who has made a thouſand experiments, with the utmoſt care and ſkill; the chemiſt who has, in like manner, decompoſed a thouſand natural, and compoſed as many artificial bodies, are ſtill liable to be deceived; becauſe it may happen that the action of one particular body ſhall not produce ſometimes the ſame effects, which the action of other bodies of the ſame ſpecific appearance has produced on innumerable trials. Our real knowledge goes no further than particular experiment: and as we attempt to make it general, we make it precarious. The reaſon is plain. It is a knowledge of particular effects that have no connection, nor dependency one on another, even when they, or more properly the powers that produce them, are united in the ſame ſubſtance: and of theſe powers conſidered as cauſes, and not in their effects, we have no means of attaining any knowledge at all. It may be, that bodies act on one another, according to their bulk, figure, and texture of their ſolid parts, by motion and pulſion, or gravity and attraction. It may be, that their action proceeds from other cauſes, ſo remote from all human conception, that we are unable not only to gueſs at them, but even to ſuſpect thatthey are. But whatever they be, ſince they are neither known nor knowable by us, what have philoſophers to do more than to redouble their induſtry in multiplying experiments, as much as they have means and opportunities of doing, ſince there may be a deficiency, but never an exceſs of them? Thus they may proceed in obtaining knowledge of particular ſubſtances by the help of their ſenſes, and in improving and applying this knowledge to greater advantage by the help of their intellect. Senſe and intellect muſt conſpire in the acquiſition of phyſical knowledge; but the latter muſt never proceed independently of the former. Ex-

periment is that pillar of fire, which can alone conduct us to the promiſed land: and they who loſe ſight of it, loſe themſelves in the dark wilds of imagination. This many have done from the infancy of philoſophy, which has laſted longer than we are apt to imagine; and which one might be tempted to think, on ſome occaſions, continues ſtill, by a fondneſs to retain ſome of the rattles and bawbles of early ages. Theſe rattles and bawbles have been laid aſide, however, by no philoſophers ſo much as by thoſe who have applied themſelves to cultivate experimental phyſics: and therefore as imperfect as our knowledge of nature is, and muſt be always, yet has it been more advanced within leſs than two centuries, than it had been in twenty that preceded them.

All the helps, that human wit and induſtry can procure, have been employed. Microſcopes and teleſcopes have been invented. Geometry has been applied to natural philoſophy, and algebra to geometry. With all theſe helps, our knowledge of nature has advanced in degree, but not in kind. There are microſcopical corpuſcles in bodies, as there are teleſcopical ſtars in the heavens, neither of which can be diſcovered without the help of one, or the other, of theſe glaſſes. But with this help, we can no more diſcover all the corpuſcles of any one body, than we can all the ſtars of the univerſe: and beſides, as to the former, if glaſſes could magnify enough to expoſe them all to our ſight, we ſhould know indeed more component particles of bodies, but we ſhould remain as ignorant of their mechanical affections, as we now are; becauſe we ſhould remain ignorant of the mechanical affections of theſe corpuſcles, or of that inward ſpring which puts theſe atoms into motion, and directs their ſeveral operations.

As

As to the celeſtial bodies which are objects of aſtronomical obſervation, they muſt be reckoned objects of natural philoſophy likewiſe; ſince they are parts of the ſame univerſal ſyſtem of nature. We take up the teleſcope, indeed, and not the microſcope to contemplate them, becauſe they are at ſuch immenſe diſtances from us: and we are ſo little concerned to know of what ſubſtances they are compoſed, or what ſubſtances they contain, that if we were not hindered by the utter impoſſibility, we might be ſo by the apparent inutility, from attempting to acquire any ſuch knowledge of them, as we labour to acquire of the outward objects that environ us in our own planet. This planet is our home, and it imports us to know as much as we can of the inward ſtructure and furniture of it. We have not the ſame concern about other habitations. But it is agreeable, and in ſome reſpects uſeful, to know the general face of the country about us. It is probable that mere curioſity begat aſtronomy: and that the uſes, to which this noble ſcience is applicable, were diſcovered afterwards. I am apt to think, that the firſt men were excited more to phyſical reſearches, by the ſhining phaenomena of the heavens, than by thoſe of the earth. Their wants forced them to look down; but as the moſt immediate of theſe were ſupplied, they began to look up again: and the men who had leaſt to do, Aegyptian, or Chaldaean ſhepherds, perhaps, were the firſt aſtronomers. But as mean and rude as the beginnings of it were, aſtronomy was ſoon cultivated by the moſt learned men, and by the greateſt princes, if we believe the traditions of antiquity concerning Belus, Atlas, and others, to have had any foundation in the truth of things. Thus much is ſure, it has been cultivated many thouſands of years, and wherever arts and ſciences have floriſhed, this ſcience has floriſhed at the head of them.

It is lawful, methinks, to conclude from hence, that a ſcience, which it has been the buſineſs of learned men in all countries, where learning has floriſhed, to advance, would have been brought to a great degree of perfection, if there had been any near proportion between the object of it and human means of knowledge. But as ſome bodies baffle our enquiries, and eſcape our knowledge by being too minute, theſe enormous maſſes do the ſame by being too remote. Our ſenſe of ſight fails us; and when our ſenſes fail us in natural philoſophy, whoſe object is actual not poſſible exiſtence, our intellect is of little uſe. It may be ſaid, it will be ſaid, that our knowledge of the heavenly bodies is brought to a great degree of perfection, and is going on daily to a greater, by the inceſſant labors of many learned men; that we have a much more extenſive, a more exact, and a truer view of the phaenomena than ever, by the vaſt advances that have been made in every part of mathematics; that we calculate their magnitudes, meaſure their diſtances, determine their figures, deſcribe their orbits, compute the degrees of their velocity, and perform a multitude of other operations concerning them, the reſult of every one of which is knowledge, with the utmoſt accuracy. It will be added, that we are not only thus able to account for appearances, but that we penetrate into the phyſical cauſes of them, that we diſcover the forces by which theſe bodies act on one another, the laws of their motion, and of their direction, by which the order and harmony of the whole ſyſtem is governed and maintained.

This may be ſaid, and more to the ſame effect, without contradiction on my part; for it is true in the main, truer than panegyric is generally. But ſtill I apprehend, that when we conſider the whole matter, as it muſt be conſidered to make a true

true eſtimate of the extent of this knowledge, that is, when we compare the objects of this ſcience with the progreſs that has been made in it, by the united labors of mankind, we ſhall find much more reaſon to admire the induſtry, and perſeverance of philoſophers, than to applaud their ſucceſs. What do we know beyond our ſolar ſyſtem? We know indeed juſt enough to give us nobler, and more magnificent ideas of the works of God, than antient philoſophy could ſuggeſt. We know that this ſyſtem to which our planet belongs, and beyond which men did not carry their thoughts antiently nor ſuſpect any other, is but a minute part of the immenſe ſyſtem of the univerſe, of the τὸ πᾶν as you Greeks, I think, call it. But as to any particular knowledge that we have, or even imagine that we have, it is next to nothing. Well may we be thus ignorant of all the ſolar ſyſtems beyond our own, the very phaenomena of which, except the twinkling of ſome of their ſuns and our fixed ſtars, are imperceptible to human ſight; when there are ſo many phaenomena in our own ſolar ſyſtem, for which we cannot account, and ſo many others, probably, that we have not yet diſcovered; when there are, even in that of the earth we inhabit, ſo many things that have hitherto eſcaped the utmoſt penetration of our ſenſes, and the utmoſt efforts of our intellect, with all the aſſiſtance that art can give to both. We cannot trace the courſe of comets, for inſtance, through all their oblique orbits: but can we trace the circulation of water that falls on our earth in rain, or that riſes in ſprings? "Veniet tempus," ſays SENECA in the ſeventh book of his natur alqueſtions, "quo iſta, quae nunc latent, in lucem "dies extrahet; et, longioris aevi diligentia, veniet tempus quo "poſteri noſtri tam aperta nos neſciiſſe mirentur." This time may come, perhaps; but if we judge of what is to come, by what is paſt, we may be tempted to think that the revolution of the platonic year will be complete as ſoon.

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THE progreſs of a ſcience, which, like this of natural philoſophy, is the work of ages, muſt be liable, as it has been and will be, to various interruptions. The ground that has been gained will be frequently loſt. The lateſt ſyſtems or hypotheſes may not be always the trueſt: and when they are ſo, the advancement of ſcience may not be accelerated by them as much as it has been retarded by thoſe that were falſe. In a word, I do not believe that SENECA would be ſo much ſurpriſed if he roſe from the dead, as we may imagine, at the progreſs that has been made ſince his days. What further progreſs will be made depends on many contingencies, and it is hard to ſay. But this is ſure, that altho knowledge acquired facilitates the acquiſition of more to a certain point, yet the progreſs we attempt to make beyond that point grows more and more difficult, and becomes a little ſooner, or a little later, quite impracticable; for nothing can be truer in phyſics, as well as in thoſe general reaſonings which are called metaphyſics, than what MONTAIGNE has ſaid, "les extremitez de notre per-" quiſition tombent toutes en eblouiſſement."

LET us carry theſe reflections one ſtep further, and we ſhall have carried them as far as is neceſſary, to ſhew how little we are fitted to acquire the knowledge to which we aſpire, and which we ſometimes pretend that we have, concerning bodies either terreſtrial or celeſtial. To inveſtigate truth with ſucceſs, in mathematics, in natural philoſophy, and indeed on every occaſion where it is difficult to be found, the analytic method muſt be employed not only in the firſt place, but as far as it can be employed about the objects of our enquiry. It has been much improved, and it has been thus employed, by the moderns. Many of them have been careful to make all the obſervations and experiments in their power, and from them they have drawn general concluſions by induction. This

now is the utmoſt that our nature, and the nature of things without us, admit to be done: and when it is ſo well done, that no objection, drawn from experience, can be made to theſe concluſions, they have a right to be placed in the rank of things known by us. But let us not be miſtaken. Tho this be human, it is not abſolute knowledge; becauſe it is not founded in abſolute certainty. Further diſcoveries of the phaenomena may contradict theſe concluſions: or, ſuppoſing no ſuch diſcoveries to be made, other concluſions may be deducible from the ſame phaenomena, or other cauſes of them may be aſſignable, for aught we know. So far is this method of reaſoning, from particular obſervations and experiments to general concluſions by induction, from amounting to real demonſtration, tho it be the beſt in our power.

This is the caſe when the minds of men are bent ſolely to the diſcovery of truth. But ſomething worſe happens when human affections and paſſions mingle in their enquiries, as they often do; for philoſophers are not free from them. The Stoics themſelves, with all their boaſted apathy, were as little ſo as any other men. When this happens, philoſophers haſten too much from the analytic to the ſynthetic method, that is, they draw general concluſions from too ſmall a number of particular obſervations, and experiments: or, without giving themſelves even this trouble, they aſſume cauſes, and principles before eſtabliſhed, as if they were certain truths, and argue from them. Nothing can be more abſurd than theſe proceedings. It is agreed, I think, out of the ſchools at leaſt, that Aristotle was eminently guilty of them; for he dealt more in common notions, than experiments, and built a world with categories, that is, by a certain logical arrangement of words: and yet even Aristotle ſeems to have warned philoſophers againſt this abuſe; for he taught, according to the report of

Sextus

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, that they ſhould not neglect ſenſe and ſeek for reaſons, " poſthabito ſenſu quaerere rationem ;" that is, that they ſhould not carry ſpeculation further than experiment and obſervation authoriſe it firſt, and confirm it afterwards. The principal reaſons of a contrary conduct may be found in lazineſs, and vanity ; in the firſt ſometimes, in the other always. Philoſophers have found it more eaſy, and more compendious to imagine, than to diſcover ; to gueſs, than to know. They have taken, therefore, this way to fame, which has been their object, at leaſt, as much as truth : and many a wild hypotheſis has paſſed for a real ſyſtem.

STRATO was a famous philoſopher, the ſcholar of THEOPHRASTUS, and the maſter of PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS. As little, and as ill as we are informed of the ſtate of natural philoſophy among the more antient naturaliſts of Greece, ſuch as PYTHAGORAS, ANAXAGORAS, DEMOCRITUS, and others, whoſe names are preſerved tho their works are loſt, we know enough of PLATO and ARISTOTLE, whoſe works have been preſerved, perhaps more to the detriment than to the advancement of learning, to determine what the ſtate of it was in the days of STRATO. We know that it was no longer the ſtudy of nature by obſervation, and experiment ; but that it conſiſted in a jargon of words, or at beſt in ſome vague hypothetical reaſonings : and yet STRATO, who could not have told the aegyptian king how the idea of purple, the color of his robe, was produced, pretended to account for all the phaenomena, and among other doctrines, to eſtabliſh that of the plenum, for he laughed at the vacuum, as well as at the whole atomical ſyſtem of DEMOCRITUS.

HYPOTHESES are much in the favor of ſome philoſophers ; for there have been many STRATOS even among the moderns.

But hypotheſes may be employed without being abuſed. In all our attempts to account for the phaenomena of nature, there will be ſomething hypothetical neceſſarily included. The analytic method itſelf, our ſureſt road to ſcience, does not conduct us further than extreme probability, as it has been obſerved; and this probability muſt ſtand us in lieu of certainty. But when we cannot arrive by this method at ſuch a probability, is it reaſonable to make an hypotheſis? Is it reaſonable, when we cannot draw from obſervation and experiment, ſuch concluſions as may be ſafe foundations on which to proceed by the ſynthetic method in the purſuit of truth, to aſſume certain principles, as if they were founded in the analytic method, which have been never proved, nor perhaps ſuggeſted by the phaenomena, in hopes that they may be ſo afterwards? In a word, when the only clue we have fails us; which is moſt reaſonable, to ſtop ſhort, or to puſh forwards without any clue at all into the labyrinth of nature? I make no ſcruple of deciding in a caſe, ſo plain, that it would be a ſilly affectation of modeſty, not modeſty, to heſitate. When the phaenomena do not point out to us any ſufficient reaſon why, and how a thing is as we diſcover it to be, nor the efficient cauſe of it, there is a ſufficient reaſon for ſtopping ſhort, and confeſſing our ignorance; but none for ſeeking, out of the phaenomena, this reaſon, and this cauſe which we cannot find in them. This is learned ignorance, of which the greateſt philoſophers have no reaſon to be aſhamed. "Rationem— "harum gravitatis proprietatum ex phaenomenis nondum po- "tui deducere, et hypotheſes non fingo," ſaid our NEWTON, after having advanced natural knowledge far beyond his cotemporaries, on the ſure foundations of experiment, and geometry. How preferable is this learned ignorance to that ignorant learning, of which ſo many others have fooliſhly boaſted? DES CARTES, who mingled ſo much hypothetical with ſo much

much real knowledge, boaſted in a letter to his intimate friend the minime MERSENNE, " that he ſhould think he knew no-
" thing in natural philoſophy, if he was only able to ſay how
" things may be, without demonſtrating that they cannot be
" otherwiſe." LEIBNITZ, who dealt in little elſe than hypotheſes, ſpeaking, in his reply to BAYLE's reflections on his preeſtabliſhed harmony, of the ridiculous whimſy of his Monades, and the reſt of his metaphyſical traſh, compares himſelf to ANTAEUS; aſſerts that " every objection gives him new
" ſtrength," and boaſts vainly, that he might ſay without vanity, " omnia praecepi, atque animo mecum antè peregi."

IT will be urged, perhaps, as deciſive in favor of hypotheſes, that they may be of ſervice, and can be of no diſſervice to us, in our purſuit of knowledge. An hypotheſis founded on mere arbitrary aſſumptions will be a true hypotheſis, and therefore of ſervice to philoſophy, if it is confirmed by many obſervations afterwards, and if no one phaenomenon ſtand in oppoſition to it. An hypotheſis that appears inconſiſtent with the phaenomena will be ſoon demonſtrated falſe, and as ſoon rejected. This reaſoning, which is the ſum of all that can be ſaid for them, will not hold good, I think, in either caſe, enough to countenance the abuſe of them, which is made by the very perſons who urge this plea in favor of them. That ſuch an hypotheſis may be true, is within the bounds of poſſibility; becauſe it implies no contradiction to ſuppoſe that men, who paſs their lives in gueſſing, may gueſs ſometimes right. A man may throw ten ſixes with ten dice; but no man in his ſenſes would lay that he did, nor venture his ſtake on ſuch a chance. In the other caſe, it is true that an hypotheſis inconſiſtent with the phaenomena may be ſoon demonſtrated falſe. But it is not true that it will be as ſoon rejected. If philoſophers are fond of making hypotheſes, their diſciples are

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as zealous to defend them. The honor of a whole ſect is thought to be engaged, and every individual is piqued that another ſhould ſhew that to be falſe, which he has all his life taken to be true; ſo that notwithſtanding all the graces of novelty, a new truth will have much to do to diſlodge an old error. Inſtances of this ſort are innumerable. Let us produce one from aſtronomy itſelf.

If any hypotheſis was ever aſſumed with a plauſible probability, that which we call the ptolemaic was ſo. The apparent face of the heavens led men to it. We may ſay, that the phaenomena ſuggeſted it, and that the revolution of the ſun, planets, and ſtars, in ſeveral ſpheres round the earth, could ſcarce be doubted of by men who aſſumed any general concluſions, inſtead of drawing them all from a long courſe of particular obſervations carefully and learnedly made. The plauſibility of this falſe hypotheſis, and the authority of the peripatetic-ſchool, eſtabliſhed it on the ruins of the true ſyſtem which Pythagoras had brought long before into Italy from the eaſt and which was probably that of the Egyptian, and Chaldaean aſtronomers. Falſe as it was, it maintained it's credit thirteen or fourteen centuries, if we reckon only from the time of the Alexandrian aſtronomer Ptolemy to that of Copernicus. Many difficuties had occurred, but as faſt as they did ſo, new aſſumptions were made to reconcile them, till the whole became one complicated heap of hypotheſis upon hypotheſis. It was baniſhed at laſt, and a truer ſyſtem took it's place. The fautors of hypotheſes would have us believe, that even the detection of their falſhood gives occaſion to our improvement in knowledge. But the road to truth does not lie through the precincts of error, and the improvement of aſtronomy was not owing to the deſtruction of the ptolemaic hypotheſis; but the deſtruction of this hypotheſis was owing to the improvement

of aſtronomy. If this hypotheſis had never been made, Copernicus would not have had the honor of reviving the pythagorean ſyſtem, but mankind would have had the benefit of purſuing, without interruption, a ſyſtem founded on knowledge, inſtead of purſuing, during an interval of ſo many centuries, an hypotheſis founded on aſſumption.

To this antient, let us join a modern inſtance to ſuggeſt the ſame reflections, and confirm the ſame proofs. The ſyſtem of Des Cartes dazzled and impoſed at firſt. It was ſoon attacked however, but it has not been ſo ſoon defeated. No man, perhaps, was ever ſo fit, as this philoſopher, to make, and maintain an hypotheſis; to aſſume, and to improve and defend his aſſumptions. The notion he entertained, and propagated, that there is beſides clear ideas, a kind of inward ſentiment of evidence, which may be a principle of knowledge, is, I ſuppoſe, dangerous in phyſical enquiries as well as in abſtract reaſoning. He who departs from the analytic method, to eſtabliſh general propoſitions concerning the phaenomena on aſſumptions, and who reaſons from theſe aſſumptions, afterwards, on inward ſentiments of evidence, as they are called, inſtead of clear and real ideas, lays aſide, at once, the only ſure guides to knowledge. No wonder then if he wanders from it. This Des Cartes did very widely in his conſtruction of a world, and yet by dint of genius he gave a great air of ſimplicity and plauſibility to his hypotheſis, and he knew how to make even geometry ſubſervient to error. It proved in other hands, indeed, the inſtrument of detecting his errors, and of eſtabliſhing truer principles of natural philoſophy. He furniſhed to others arms againſt himſelf, among the reſt to our Newton; for tho the ſyſtem of the latter be no more owing to the hypotheſis of the former, than that of Copernicus to that of Ptolemy, yet was it the application of geometry

geometry to phyſics, that enabled the britiſh philoſopher to make ſo many admirable diſcoveries: and the introduction of geometry into phyſics muſt be acknowledged due to the french philoſopher. To conclude, by bringing this example to our purpoſe. The plenum of DES CARTES is well nigh deſtroyed; many of his laws of motion are ſhewn to be falſe; the mills that ſerved to grind his three elements are demoliſhed: and his fluid matter in which, as in a torrent, the planets were carried round the ſun, whilſt a ſimilar motion in the particular vortex of every planet impelled all bodies to the center, is vaniſhed. Notwithſtanding all this; how ſlowly, how unwillingly have many philoſophers departed from the carteſian hypotheſis? They have had recourſe to the moſt forced ſuppoſitions to defend it; and when it has been demonſtrated falſe in one of the principal parts, in that of his fluid matter, whoſe rapid circulation he ſuppoſes to cauſe the fall of bodies, and the motion of the planets, and which he invented to explain theſe phaenomena, we ſhall be told very gravely, that ſome fluid matter or other may, however, in ſome manner or other, be the cauſe of theſe phaenomena. It is even ridiculous to obſerve the ſame men tenacious of an hypotheſis neither deduced from the phaenomena, nor conſiſtent with them, and averſe to receive, or at beſt extremely ſcrupulous about receiving, a ſyſtem built on obſervation and experiment, not on aſſumption, and which all the phaenomena conſpire to eſtabliſh.

IF philoſophers meaned nothing more than the diſcovery of truth, they would confine themſelves to thoſe rules by which alone, and to thoſe bounds of enquiry within which alone, we are able to diſcover it. But a predominant principle of vanity makes them break theſe rules, and paſs theſe bounds. Not content with philoſophical liberty, they affect to proceed licentiouſly: and it is this affectation that makes them ſo fond of hypo-

hypotheſes, by the means of which, how imperfect ſoever their knowledge is, their pretended ſyſtems are ſtill complete. Thus it has happened that natural philoſophers have filled their works with fictions, and, like lying travellers, have given deſcriptions of countries through which they never paſſed. They have done even more, they have affected to reveal the ſecrets of courts they never ſaw. This I mean; they have not only ſuppoſed exiſtences that never exiſted, but have preſumed themſelves able to give a ſufficient reaſon for every thing that does exiſt. LEIBNITZ, who had much knowledge and ſome ſagacity, but too much pretended ſubtilty and real preſumption, impoſed this obligation on philoſophers, the obligation of adulterating phyſics with metaphyſics. Thus for inſtance, he thought himſelf obliged to give a ſufficient reaſon how, and why the extenſion of body, or body according to the Carteſians, becomes poſſible; for tho actuality may, he denied that poſſibility could proceed from the will of God. He found this reaſon neither in ſenſible extenſion, nor in the inſenſible atoms that compoſe body. But he found it happily in his Monades, that is in ſimple, unextended beings, that are the only ſubſtances, and that compoſe all extenſion, which God could not have created if he had not created them firſt. Is it worth while to acquire the name of a great philoſopher, at the expence of amuſing mankind with ſuch hypothetical extravagancies? Surely not.

SINCE I have ventured to cenſure DES CARTES on this head, on which he was very liable to cenſure, I think myſelf obliged to juſtify him on another, on which he has been accuſed very unjuſtly. STRATO might be an atheiſt, for what I know, tho mention is made, in the catalogue of his works preſerved by DIOGENES LAERTIUS, of three books that he wrote concerning the gods. But the paſſage in the academics of TULLY, where

it is ſaid, that he did not employ the gods in making the world, "negat operâ deorum ſe uti ad fabricandum mundum," will not perſuade me that he was ſo. Nothing can be more conſiſtent than to acknowledge a ſupreme Being, the ſource of all exiſtence, the firſt efficient cauſe of all things, and to account for the phaenomena by phyſical and mechanical cauſes, by matter and motion. This DES CARTES therefore endeavored, and might endeavor to do without forfeiting the character of a good theiſt. Philoſophers might very reaſonably object to his hypotheſis, but divines had the leſs reaſon to do ſo; becauſe, beſides proving the exiſtence of the ſelf-exiſtent Being by an argument which he thought good, and which has been urged as deciſive by MALEBRANCHE and others, the very foundation of his doctrine reſts on theſe principles, that God created matter and that he impreſſed two motions on the parts of it. But my Lord BACON, a much better apologiſt than I am, had obviated the objection made to DES CARTES long before this philoſopher had writ, in the third book of the augmentation of ſcience: and the paſſage is ſo conſiderable, that I will dwell, with your leave, a little upon it.

THIS great author then was ſo deſirous to keep metaphyſicians in countenance, by keeping metaphyſics in the rank of ſciences, that he reſolved at any rate to give them an object. As ſuch he aſſigned the doctrine of formal cauſes: and indeed if he had admitted the forms of PLATO, forms entirely abſtracted from matter, theſe would have been imaginary objects in his ſcheme of ſome ſcience more ſublime than phyſics. But theſe he rejects deſervedly, as theological ſpeculations that infected and corrupted the whole of PLATO's natural philoſophy: ſo that he left himſelf no forms to eſtabliſh as objects of metaphyſics, but ſuch as muſt be diſcovered, if they are to be diſcovered,

diſcovered, by phyſics; which he himſelf admits in effect, when he ſays, that we may diſcover them if we turn our eyes to action and uſe; that is, to the action and uſe of ſubſtances, whoſe forms are the ſpecies of things; and which he confirms, I think, by the examples he brings to explain this inexplicable doctrine, or rather unattainable ſcience. In default of this, that the learned chancellor might provide ſome object for metaphyſics, he eſtabliſhed the inquiſition, or reſearch of final cauſes as a ſecond. He ſhould not be much concerned, he ſays, if the order of this reſearch, that he would place among metaphyſics, and that has been placed uſually among phyſics, were alone concerned. Now here I venture with fear and trembling, but I muſt venture, for the love of truth puſhes me on, to differ from this great man. The order according to which the doctrine of final cauſes is confined to the known phyſical province, inſtead of being tranſlated to a metaphyſical region, appears to me not only uſeful, but neceſſary to be preſerved, as well to advance real knowledge, as to prevent error, both philoſophical and theological. The more we proceed in the ſtudy of nature, under the conduct of experimental philoſophy, the more diſcoveries we make and ſhall make of the infinite wiſdom as well as power of it's author. The ſtructure of the parts, the deſign and harmony of the whole, will be matter of perpetual aſtoniſhment, and ought to be a motive to the moſt devout adoration of that ſupreme, and incomprehenſible Being, of God the maker and the preſerver of the univerſe. I ſaid the harmony and deſign, as well as the ſtructure; for beſides the admirable contrivance which appears in the bare ſtructure of all the bodies, animal bodies eſpecially, that ſurround us, as well as of our own, when we contemplate them without any regard to their diſtinction, wants, or uſes, there appears ſomething ſtill more admirable when we contemplate them in theſe reſpects. Some-

times we can diſcover neither efficient, nor final cauſe; ſometimes, but more rarely, both. Sometimes we diſcover the former, and the latter eſcapes our enquiry. Sometimes again the final cauſe is more obvious than the efficient, as in one of the inſtances brought by my lord BACON; for ſurely this final cauſe, that eye-laſhes were given to ſhadow and defend the eye, is much more evident than the efficient cauſe he aſſigns, or any other, perhaps, that can be aſſigned. But in all caſes where ſuch diſcoveries are made really, they are made by phyſical reſearches. When we proceed in the inveſtigation of them by the help of experimental philoſophy, we put ourſelves under the conduct of God, who leads us by the knowledge of his works to the knowledge of himſelf. But when we abandon this method, and pretend by the ſtrength of our intellect to arrive at ſuperior ſcience, we put ourſelves under the conduct of imagination, the worſt guide a philoſopher can chuſe, and never ſo ſeducing, nor ſo dangerous as in the brighteſt genius. This remark is abundantly confirmed in general by the experience of all ages *.

FOR

* IT comes into my thoughts to mention, upon this occaſion, another opinion, which caſts a ridicule on all religion. If we are able to collect any truth from our obſervations on the mundane ſyſtem, beſides that of a ſelf exiſtent and intelligent firſt cauſe of all things, it is that of final cauſes. The certainty we have of theſe makes part of the demonſtration of the other, and is the ſublimeſt and moſt important ſpeculation in which natural philoſophy can terminate. I ſay terminate, becauſe the abſurdity of thoſe philoſophers, who, in the courſe of their enquiries, aſſigned final inſtead of phyſical cauſes, has been already expoſed. The abuſe which thoſe who profeſs theology in all religions make of final cauſes is of another kind, and may ſerve as a further example of the fantaſtical and profane notions which men aſſume hypothetically, when they carry their reaſonings about ſpirit and ſpiritual things, without regard to what experience might teach them, up to the divine nature and oeconomy.

MANKIND, in general, eſteem their ſpecies to be the final cauſe of the whole creation, and each ſociety or ſect of men is inſtructed to eſteem itſelf a principal, if not the ſole, object of providence. On this foundation even they, who never obſerved, perhaps, any of the numberleſs and aſtoniſhing inſtances

For theſe reaſons which might be greatly extended and inforced, I cannot ſubſcribe to the partition of ſcience which our famous chancellor makes on this occaſion. They, who have no pretenſions to be eſteemed natural philoſophers, profit in their ſeveral profeſſions of the diſcoveries which theſe philoſophers make about efficient cauſes. Juſt ſo divines, or they who call themſelves metaphyſicians, may profit of thoſe which the ſame philoſophers make about final cauſes: and when they

of order, contrivance and deſign, which are obvious in the conſtitution of things, aſcribe, and inſtruct others to aſcribe, every event that is produced, in the ordinary courſe of nature, to extraordinary interpoſitions of God's immediate and particular providence, juſt as they may be ſtrained to ſuit prejudice, intereſt, vanity, and paſſion. I need not bring examples in proof. They will occur to you faſt enough, to ſhew how a doctrine, that ſhould increaſe our admiration of God's infinite wiſdom and power, and enliven all the acts of adoration that we direct to this incomprehenſible Being, plunges men by the abuſe they make, and a wrong application of it, into error and ſuperſtition. It is error proportioned to the comprehenſion of every mind, and to the vanity of every heart. It prevails, therefore, eaſily, and ſpreads from the higheſt down to the loweſt ranks of men. If the ridiculous queſtion, which SENECA puts in his book concerning providence, "nunquid hoc "quoque à Deo aliquis exigit, ut bonorum virorum etiam ſarcinas ſervat?" had been put to your pariſh clerk, he would have anſwered, I doubt not, with much holy aſſurance, in the affirmative, and would have inſerted, among his anecdotes, ſome ſpecial examples of wallets, and bundles providentially ſaved, or recovered. The Stoics are ridiculed, in TULLY's academical queſtions, for having low notions of the divinity, and ſuch as ſuppoſed among the gods a worker like MYRMECIDES, who was famous in his time, as well as one CALLICRATES, for making bees, and flies, and ants, and other ſmall inſects in ivory. The joke was unjuſtly applied, as far as it was applied to this general poſition, that nothing could be without God, "cupis quidem vos majeſtatem deducitis," ſays the academician, "uſque ad apium, formicarumque perfectionem: ut etiam inter Deos MYRMECI-"DES aliquis minutorum opuſculorum fabricator fuiſſe videatur." This joke on the Stoics was unphiloſophical and ſilly. But what advantage would this academician have taken over them, if he could have laid to their charge, not only that they made God the immediate author of the leaſt, as well as of the greateſt productions in nature, but that they made him the efficient cauſe of every immoral ſentiment and action? He would have had then a large field, indeed, wherein to exult, "in quo poſſit exultare oratio." But the Stoics, as abſurd and as ſuperſtitious as many of their opinions were, gave him no ſuch advantage. He muſt have waited till our age, to have had ſuch a monſtrous opinion as this to combat among the profeſſors of theiſm.

they do ſo in ſuch a manner as to create, and maintain in the minds of men, a due awe and reverence of the ſupreme Being, theſe diſcoveries will be productive of the beſt, and nobleſt effects; far from being barren like virgin's conſecrated to God, as the chancellor expreſſes himſelf, rather prettily than truly. "Cauſarum finalium inquiſitio ſterilis eſt, et "tanquam virgo Deo conſecrata nil parit." But ſtill there will be as little reaſon to advance, that the inveſtigation of final cauſes is a part of metaphyſics, or of theology, as there is to ſay, that the inveſtigation of efficient cauſes is the object of every profeſſion wherein ſome knowledge concerning them is employed.

Now, tho I cannot ſubſcribe to this partition of ſcience, nor think the order in which the reſearch of final cauſes is placed at all indifferent, yet I ſubſcribe moſt readily to all that is ſaid in the ſame place againſt thoſe who ſubſtitute final in lieu of efficient cauſes. Both are objects, but diſtinct objects of phyſics, and nothing can tempt men to confound them but a ſort of lazineſs and vanity. By one they are led to decline ſome trouble, and by the other to hope to conceal their ignorance. We ſhall not be at all uncharitable, in aſſigning ſuch motives to the two philoſophers, who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by this proceeding, in which they have been followed, as in other abſurdities, by numbers. PLATO had a luxuriant imagination, and a great flow of words. It coſt him, therefore, much leſs to invent final cauſes, and to expatiate theologically upon them, than it would have done to purſue the diſcovery of efficient cauſes by the ſlow and painful courſe of experiments. ARISTOTLE had great ſubtilty of genius, and the ſame ambition that made him think, like an Ottoman prince, to uſe my lord BACON's ſimile, that he could not reign ſecurely, unleſs he put all his brethren

to death, made him think too, that he ought at any rate to maintain his pretenſions to univerſal knowledge. For this purpoſe he perplexed what he could not explain, and in the inſtance before us he diſcourſed logically about final cauſes, to conceal his ignorance of the efficient. I ſhould be unwilling to warrant any fact on the authority of JUSTIN MARTYR, on whom the idleſt tales were able to impoſe; but the bare report that ran in Greece concerning the death of this philoſopher, who was ſaid to have drowned himſelf in the Negropontic current, for ſhame that he had not diſcovered the cauſe of it, may ſerve to ſhew, that the character he has at this day, is that which he had in his own age and country. Upon the whole, it may very well be, that DEMOCRITUS and others, whether atheiſts, or theiſts, who gave, or ſeemed to give no place to God, nor intelligence in the production of the phaenomena, nor made any mention by conſequence of final cauſes, but applied themſelves wholly to the diſcovery of material efficient cauſes, might penetrate, for that very reaſon, deeper into natural philoſophy than they could have done, if they had recurred often to the wiſdom and power of God, like PLATO, to thoſe of nature like ARISTOTLE, and to final cauſes like both. This might be, and my lord BACON who thinks ſo, and who approved this method of purſuing the ſtudy of phyſics, prepared, therefore, an apology for DES CARTES, long before this philoſopher wanted it.

THERE is a paſſage in PLATO which I ſhall have occaſion to quote, in another place, and to another purpoſe, where SOCRATES after reading a treatiſe of natural philoſophy which ANAXAGORAS had writ, ſneers at him, and complains, that he who aſcribed the ſtructure of the univerſe to a ſupreme mind, labored ſo much in the explanation of material, inſtead of diſcourſing about final cauſes. This paſſage would prove

prove beyond diſpute, if any proof was wanting, that PLATO introduced, or ſupported at leaſt by the authority of SOCRATES, the abſurd cuſtom of ſubſtituting final intentional cauſes in the place of mechanical and material; and that philoſophers, who were as good theiſts as himſelf, tho they did not affect ſo much theology, purſued the ſtudy of nature in the ſame method as the materialiſts, tho they aſſerted an intelligent firſt cauſe, which the others denied.

THE truth is, that neither theſe philoſophers, nor even the others could proceed in the inveſtigation of material cauſes, without diſcovering ſometimes the intentional, final cauſes of things; becauſe the latter are often, tho not always, ſo plainly pointed out by the former, that he who does not ſee them muſt ſhut his eyes on purpoſe. When they are not thus plainly pointed out, it is vain preſumption to pretend to account for them: and SOCRATES would have had no reaſon to complain, if a naturaliſt, a ſtranger to Athens, looking at him in his priſon, and ſeeing him fettered and chained, had ſhewn how it came to paſs that he could not walk, and that he could ſit, without preſuming to determine why he was there.

To conclude and wind up this ſection; there is no ſtudy, after that of morality, which deſerves the application of the human mind, ſo much as that of natural philoſophy, and of the arts and ſciences which ſerve to promote it. The will of God, in the conſtitution of our moral ſyſtem, is the object of one. His infinite wiſdom and power, that are manifeſted in the natural ſyſtem of the univerſe, are the object of the other. One is the immediate concern of every man, and lies therefore within the reach of every man. The other does ſo too, as far as our immediate wants require, and far enough to excite awe and veneration of a ſupreme Being in every attentive mind.

But

But further than this, a knowledge of phyſical nature is not the immediate and neceſſary concern of every man; and therefore a further enquiry into it becomes the labor of a few, tho the fruits of this enquiry be to the advantage of many. Diſcoveries of uſe in human life have been ſometimes made; but theſe fruits in general conſiſt chiefly in the gratification of curioſity. Their acquiſition, therefore, is painful: and when all that can be gathered are gathered, the crop will be ſmall. Should the human ſpecies exiſt a thouſand generations more, and the ſtudy of nature be carried on through all of them with the ſame application, a little more particular knowledge of the apparent properties of matter, and of the ſenſible principles and laws of motion might be acquired: more phaenomena might be diſcovered, and a few more of thoſe links, perhaps, which compoſe the great immeaſurable chain of cauſes and effects that deſcends from the throne of God. But human ſenſe, which can alone furniſh the materials of this knowledge, continuing the ſame, the want of ideas, the want of adequate ideas would make it to the laſt impracticable to penetrate into the great ſecrets of nature, the real eſſences of ſubſtances, and the primary cauſes of their action, their paſſion, and all their operations; ſo that mankind would ceaſe to be, without having acquired a complete and real knowledge of the world they inhabited, and of the bodies they wore in it.

SECT. IV.

HAVING now ſaid all that occurs to me at preſent, concerning our complex ideas of ſubſtances, whoſe architypes are without us; I proceed to take ſome further notice than has been yet taken by me, of our other complex ideas and notions which are ſaid to have their architypes within us, and which

may be ſaid, I think, more properly in the ſame ſenſe to be architypes themſelves. Nor is this the ſole difference, by which they are diſtinguiſhed from the former. Thoſe of ſubſtances are received by the mind in it's paſſive, theſe are framed by the mind in it's active ſtate. They are framed by the mind as the mind has need of them, and therefore on no ſubjects ſo much as on thoſe that regard the thoughts, the opinions, the affections, the paſſions, and the actions of mankind. The architypes of our ideas of ſubſtances exiſt whether our minds perceive them or not. Theſe being architypes themſelves, and having no exiſtence out of the mind, have no permanent exiſtence any where, not even in the mind; for there they exiſt no longer than whilſt they are the immediate objects of thought. They ceaſe to exiſt, when they ceaſe to be perceived. But the mind, having once made them, can recall them into being, and employ them to facilitate the acquiſition and communication of knowledge. It is true indeed, and it has been obſerved already, that nature ſeems to obtrude, or obtrudes even the complex ideas of modes and relations upon us, as well as thoſe of ſubſtances. But ſtill there is a plain difference between the two caſes, which muſt be a little more and more preciſely developed, than it has been in the ſecond ſection. Both are leſſons, but different leſſons of nature. Senſe alone is immediately concerned in one, whether we receive by it the firſt impreſſions of outward objects, or whether we correct, and determine the ideas theſe impreſſions have given us. But intellect is immediately and principally concerned in the other. Intellect ſerves in the uſe and application of ideas acquired by ſenſe, but has no ſhare in framing them. Intellect on the other hand has always an immediate, and principal ſhare, and is ſometimes alone employed, in framing our complex ideas and notions of modes and relations. Thus, for inſtance, to mention a ſimple as well as a mixed mode; when we obſerve certain

termi-

terminations of finite extenſion, or certain proceedings of men to men, the leſſon of nature does not conſiſt in this, that theſe are patterns by which, and according to which the ideas, or notions we ſpeak of, are framed, without any ſhare taken by the mind except that of perception; but it conſiſts rather in giving hints, if I may ſay ſo, which are vague, and neither determined, nor claſſed, like our ideas of ſubſtances; and the mind, taking theſe hints, frames by the exerciſe of it's diſcerning, compounding, and comparing faculties, theſe ideas or notions. The terminations of extenſion, that are ſeen by us, produce ideas no doubt; but I chuſe on this occaſion to deſign them as hints, becauſe they do not ſo much give, as ſuggeſt the ideas which the mind frames by conſidering theſe terminations of the extreme parts of extenſion, both diſtinctly, and relatively. Confuſed appearances of this ſort ſtrike the ſenſes, but the ideas of particular figures, as well as the general notion of figure, may be framed independently of theſe ſenſations by the mind. In like manner, an action which we ſee performed, as in the caſe of killing mentioned above, gives an idea no doubt; but this idea, in the reſpect in which it is conſidered here, is nothing more than an hint to the mind, that paſſes from a bare perception of the action to contemplate all the circumſtances of it, and all the relations both of the action, and of the actors, and ſo frames by reflection, without the concurrence of ſenſation, ideas and notions of another kind, both particular and general. This is the great intellectual province, wherein our minds range with much freedom, and often with exorbitant licence, in the purſuit of real, or imaginary ſcience. We add ideas to ideas, and notions to notions, and by conſidering the habitudes and relations of all theſe, we acquire at length ſuch a multitude as aſtoniſhes the mind itſelf, and is both for number and variety inconceivable.

When we take ſuch a general view of human knowledge, and repreſent to ourſelves all the objects that our minds purſue, and in the purſuit whereof we pretend not only to reaſon on leſs or greater grounds of probability, but moſt commonly to demonſtrate, we are apt to entertain an high opinion, and to make extravagant encomiums of our intellect. But when we enter into a ſerious and impartial detail concerning this knowledge, and analyſe carefully, what the great pretenders to it have given and give us daily for knowledge, we ſhall be obliged to confeſs, that the human intellect is rather a rank than a fertile ſoil, barren without due culture, and apt to ſhoot up tares and weeds with too much. By ſuch combinations of ideas as I have been mentioning, we ſhorten and facilitate the operations of our minds, as well as the communication of our thoughts. Our knowledge becomes general, and our intellect ſeems to be leſs dependent on ſenſe. From which obſervations philoſophers have entertained falſe notions of what they call pure intellect, and have flattered themſelves that they could extend their knowledge, by the power the mind exerciſes in framing complex ideas and notions, very far beyond the narrow bounds to which it is limited by ſimple ideas, over which the mind has not the leaſt original power, and which muſt therefore, let the mind compoſe, combine, and abſtract them as it pleaſes (for it cannot make any) determine the extent of our complex ideas and notions.

But, beſides the limitations impoſed on the mind by the human conſtitution, there is another which we ourſelves muſt impoſe on it, if we deſire to combine our ideas and our notions ſo as to obtain, by their means, real and uſeful knowledge. It is the more neceſſary to inſiſt on this limitation, becauſe philoſophers have not only neglected it too much in practice, but endeavored to eſtabliſh opinions inconſiſtent with it. Ob-

ſerve the chain of theſe opinions. The human mind is a participation of the divine mind, or an emanation from it, or ſomething very analogous to it. The eſſences of things do not depend on God; for if they did, things might be poſſible and impoſſible at the ſame time according to his will, which implies contradiction. The divine intelligence is the ſcene of all things poſſible: but tho the divine will be the ſource of actuality, it is not ſo of poſſibility. Poſſibility and impoſſibility are fixed natures, independent on God. The knowledge of things poſſible, independently of their exiſtence, is abſolute knowledge. The knowledge of things actual, in conſequence of their exiſtence, is relative knowledge. The human mind is capable of both. Philoſophers may, therefore, contemplate the intelligible natures, the fixed and unalterable eſſences of things, whether the will of God determines them to actual exiſtence or not. Philoſophers may reaſon therefore not only from their own ſyſtem, that of actuality; but from God's, that of poſſibility. Theſe opinions, ſome of which are nearly true, others of which are abſolutely falſe, and all of which are liable to much abuſe, have been advanced: and theſe, and others of the ſame kind, are the neceſſary foundations of the moſt ſublime metaphyſics. Let us deſcend from ſuch imaginary heights; place ourſelves on the human level, and conſider from thence what this part of human knowledge is, concerning which we are now to ſpeak, and from whence, and how it ariſes.

It has been obſerved, in ſpeaking of that part of natural philoſophy which contemplates ſubſtances, that we muſt never loſe ſight of experience, if we aim at acquiring real knowledge. But we may go further on as good grounds, and affirm, that the ſame rule muſt be followed in that other part of natural philoſophy (for ſuch it is if it be any thing) which contemplates mind; and in all our general, or abſtract rea-

ſonings about moral, or other matters. I am far from ſaying that we ſhould not reaſon about things poſſible, as well as things actual, or that we ſhould exclude every thing hypothetical out of our reaſonings. I know too well, that probability is our lot oftner than certainty. But this I ſay, that we ſhould never reaſon about the firſt, except under the direction of the laſt, and much leſs in contradiction to the laſt. God's knowledge precedes all exiſtence. All exiſtence proceeds from his knowledge and his will. He made things actual, becauſe he knew them, and why ſhould I not ſay becauſe he made them poſſible? But we poor creatures ſhould not be able to gueſs at things poſſible, if we did not take our riſe from things actual. Human knowledge is ſo entirely and ſolely derived from actual Being, that without actual Being, we ſhould not have even one of thoſe ſimple ideas, whereof all the complex ideas and abſtract notions that turn our heads are compoſed. Theſe complex ideas and abſtract notions, to be materials of general and real knowledge, muſt have a conformity with exiſtence. They muſt be true, not in an idle metaphyſical ſenſe, that they are really what they are; but in this ſenſe, that they are true repreſentations of actual, or of ſuch poſſible exiſtence, as experience leaves us no room to doubt may become actual.

That this is agreeable to the common ſenſe of mankind undebauched with philoſophy or ſuperſtition, the univerſal practice of mankind may ſerve to convince us. The human mind is able to frame many complex ideas and abſtract notions, to which no names have been aſſigned in any language, becauſe they have not been brought into uſe among any people. Many other complex ideas and abſtract notions have names aſſigned to them in one language, and are in uſe among one people, and have no ſuch names, nor are in any ſuch

uſe among another. What ſhall we ſay is the reaſon of ſuch, obvious matters of fact? The reaſon appears to me to be plainly this. Men are determined to frame theſe complex ideas, and abſtract notions, by the want they have of them: and the want they have of them ariſes from hence, that they obſerve certain combinations of beings, of actions, of modes, and relations to exiſt, relatively to which they could neither think, diſcourſe, nor act, all which it is often either their inclination, their intereſt or their duty to do, unleſs they applied their minds to the framing of ſuch ideas and notions. Men form, therefore, no where, complex ideas and notions of combinations of this kind, which they have obſerved to exiſt no where as in the firſt caſe. Nor do they form them always where ſuch combinations do exiſt; tho they are not enough obſerved to have the want of theſe ideas, and notions perceived as in the ſecond caſe. Theſe ideas and notions are ſo neceſſary to the improvement of knowledge, that as we proceed in acquiring, and communicating it by the employment of ſome, ſo the knowledge we acquire makes it neceſſary in every ſtep we advance to frame, and to employ more, that we may proceed further.

It is reaſonable to believe that the firſt of men had framed no ideas, nor notions of jealouſy, envy, anger, malice, treachery, and murder in paradiſe, nor perhaps out of it, before Cain ſlew Abel. Then, no doubt, he framed all theſe, and thoſe of aſſaſſination and fratricide beſides, and invented words to ſignify them as he had invented names for all the beaſts of the field, and fowls of the air, when they paſſed in review before him. Since the days of Adam, and his unhappy fall, as the number, and the iniquity of his poſterity encreaſed, ſo has their experience: and therefore legiſlators, and the founders of commonwealths, and all thoſe who have civilized and inſtructed mankind, have been careful to obſerve the behavior,

and the dealings of men with one another in the ſame, and in different ſocieties. They have remarked the circumſtances, and the conſequences of every action relatively to the happineſs and unhappineſs of mankind. Thoſe of one ſort have been termed virtues, thoſe of the other vices: and as theſe virtues and vices have ariſen, and have offered themſelves to obſervation, the ſame perſons, political and moral philoſophers, have proceeded in determining complex ideas or notions of them, and in marking the ſeveral combinations by diſtinct names, in order to promote the practice of virtue, and to reſtrain vice by improving the natural ſanctions of rewards and puniſhments.

Thus then the principles of the law of nature, and of civil juriſprudence have been collected à poſteriori, by experience and obſervation: and the ſame method ſhould be taken in every part of philoſophy, tho I have inſiſted particularly on this alone. We ſhould not ſuffer, much leſs encourage, imagination to rove in the ſearch of truth. To know things as they are, is to know truth. To know them as they may be, is to gueſs at truth. Judgment and obſervation guide to one, imagination and ſpeculation to the other. To know them as they are, the mind muſt be conſtantly intent to frame it's ideas and notions after that great original, nature; for tho theſe ideas and notions are properly and uſefully framed by the mind, that they may ſerve as architypes by which we reaſon, and according to which we judge, yet muſt all the parts of them be taken from nature, and no otherwiſe put together than nature warrants. As well may the painter copy the features of a face on which he never looks, by pure gueſs, as the philoſopher frame his ideas and notions of nature, phyſical and moral, by pure intellect. One may draw a metaphyſical man, and the other invent a metaphyſical hypotheſis. But the features of the picture, and the ideas and notions of the ſyſtem being taken

taken from imaginary not real exiſtence, the picture will be the picture of no body, and the ſyſtem the ſyſtem of nothing. Nay, there is ſtill a worſe conſequence that follows often, becauſe it is almoſt unavoidable. Imagination ſubmitted to judgment will never go beyond knowledge founded on experience, or high probability immediately deducible from it. But when imaginations naturally warm, and excited by a ſtrong deſire of being diſtinguiſhed, break looſe from this controul, tho the poſſible man, and the poſſible ſyſtem may be ſo compoſed as to contain nothing abſolutely impoſſible, yet they may contain ſomething monſtrous, like thoſe productions wherein nature deviates from her regular courſe. Whenever this happens, and it has often happened in philoſophy, it muſt not be deemed a jot leſs abſurd to take theſe ideas and notions for real architypes, or the ſyſtem they compoſe for a ſyſtem of real knowledge, than it would be to take ſuch monſtrous productions for the architypes of any ſpecies.

This proceeding is the more dangerous, becauſe we may accuſtom our minds to contemplate chimeras till they grow familiar to us, and paſs for realities. After which we ſhall not fail to reaſon from them, and to controul even what is, by what imagination has told us may be. The very reverſe ſhould be our practice. All that we imagine may be, ſhould be compared over and over with the things that are: and till ſuch a compariſon and analyſe has been well and ſufficiently made, all argumentation is impertinent. We can frame ideas of a centaur, or an Hipogryph. No contradiction is implied by ranking them among poſſible beings. We can ſhew wherein theſe complex ideas agree and diſagree. We can reaſon, frame propoſitions, affirm, and deny concerning them; but yet every man who is not out of his ſenſes will confeſs, I ſuppoſe, that theſe ideas are fantaſtical, and that it is, therefore, abſurd

abſurd to reaſon about them. They are phantaſtical becauſe their ſuppoſed architypes do not exiſt. The reaſoning about hem is abſurd, becauſe it is abſurd to reaſon about ſubſtances that are not actual, tho they may be poſſible.

But I aſk, is it a jot leſs abſurd to frame ideas, and notions, of mixed modes and relations, any otherwiſe than experience ſhews us that nature warrants to do. Mr. Locke has obſerved truly, that "mixed modes are made for the "moſt part out of the ſimple ideas of thinking, and motion, "wherein all action is comprehended, and out of that of "power, from whence we conceive all action to proceed." Now if this be ſo, is it not evident that mixed modes, how much ſo ever mixed, are reſolvable, and ſhould be analyſed into ideas leſs complex, and theſe ultimately into ſimple ideas? Is it not evident that whether we conſider intellectual, or corporeal agency, whether we frame mixed modes of powers as modifications of thought and motion, or whether we conſider them only for want of being able to do more, in the actions they produce, is it not evident that we muſt have recourſe on all theſe occaſions to exiſtence, exiſtence of powers, and actions, or of actions at leaſt?

The example of power and action, which I employ in ſpeaking of mixed modes, is equally applicable to the caſe of relations, among which that of cauſe and effect is one of the moſt conſiderable, as it is the relation, concerning which the mind of man is the moſt curious to acquire knowledge. All our ideas of relation are framed by the compariſon the mind makes of one idea with another: as theſe ideas therefore are phantaſtical, or real, ſo our ideas of their relations, how juſtly ſoever the mind makes the compariſon, are in effect phantaſtical, or real too. The compariſon therefore muſt be not only that of ideas with ideas, but that of ideas with the objects

jects of them, with things. This recourſe to exiſtence is ſo truly the only ſure rule by which we can frame our ideas in ſuch a manner as to make them proper materials of real human knowledge at leaſt, that it is, I ſuppoſe, a miſtake moſt commonly when we are thought to frame phantaſtical ideas of relations, by a wrong compariſon of real ideas. I ſuppoſe we ſhall find on ſuch occaſions, if we obſerve cloſely, that the phantaſtical idea of relation does not ariſe ſo much from a wrong compariſon of real ideas which the mind contemplates, as from a voluntary or involuntary corruption of the reality of theſe ſuppoſed real ideas.

I SAY voluntary, or involuntary, becauſe philoſophers are apt to make complex ideas and notions of all kinds, not only wantonly, but unfairly. Theſe ideas and notions ſhould be compoſed in order to aſſiſt the mind in forming opinions, or acquiring knowledge. But it is obvious to obſervation, that men begin very often by forming ſtrange opinions, or by taking them on truſt; and afterwards put together inconſiſtent, and inadequate ideas, which they ſuppoſe to be both conſiſtent, and adequate, in order to frame ſuch ideas of mixed modes and relations, as may help them to impoſe, or defend their opinions with ſome appearance of plauſibility. The mind wanders eaſily; and is eaſily, more eaſily led into error about modes and relations, than about ſubſtances: and error about the former, may be concealed better, and defended more plauſibly by metaphyſical chicane, than about the latter. Let us keep our minds, therefore, conſtantly intent on thoſe criterions which our phyſical and moral ſyſtems hold out to us: and if by ſurpriſe, inadvertency, or prepoſſeſſion we have been led too far from them, let us return to them as to the oracles of truth. For want of doing one or the other, into what extravagant opinions, under the ſpecious names of metaphyſical,

or

or theological ſcience, have not men been carried? You give us philoſophy in a poetical dreſs. You adorn, but do not diſguiſe, and much leſs corrupt the truth. There are who have given us mere poetry in a philoſophical dreſs: and, I think, you muſt admit that PLATO, MALEBRANCHE, and a good friend of ours, to inſtance in none of inferior note, are as truly poets as HOMER and you. In a word, the boaſted power of framing complex ideas, and abſtract notions, will be found, as it is exerciſed, to be ſo far from ſhewing the great force and extent of human intellect, and from raiſing man up to divinity, that it will ſhew, on the contrary, how weak and how confined this intellect is, and ſink him down, if you will allow me ſuch an expreſſion, into that animality above which he affects ſo vainly to riſe.

THIS now, whereof we have taken ſome view in ſeveral of it's branches, is that noble fund of ideas from whence all our intellectual riches are derived. The mind of man does often what princes and ſtates have done. It gives a currency to braſs and copper coined in the ſeveral philoſophical and theological mints, and raiſes the value of gold and ſilver above that of their true ſtandard. But the ſucceſs of this expedient is much alike in both caſes. In different ſects, as in different ſtates, the impoſition paſſes; but none are the richer for it.

ONE great advantage that has been reaped ſince the reſurrection of letters, and ſince the improvements of modern philoſophy in the ſtudy of nature intellectual and corporeal, has been this, that men have diſcerned their ignorance better than they did in the days of ignorance, and that they have diſcovered more and more of it, as they have advanced in knowledge. A great part of this diſcovery is that of the limitation as well as imperfection of our ſimple and complex ideas

and notions. Limited and imperfect they are, no doubt, and yet it would be well for us if they had no other defect. Another, and, on many occaſions, a greater belongs to them; for, even in the narrow compaſs to which they extend, they are apt to fluctuate and vary: ſo that beſides the difficulty of determining them well, there is that of preſerving the determination of them ſteadily in our minds. He, who is attentive to do ſo, muſt acknowledge the difficulty he finds of this ſort even in his private meditations. But the difficulty encreaſes vaſtly when he is to communicate theſe ideas and notions in diſcourſe or writing, and above all if he is obliged to enter the liſts of diſputation.

Our complex ideas being aſſemblages of ſimple ideas, that have often no other connection except that which the mind gives them, we might be eaſily led to conceive the difficulty of this taſk by a bare reflection on the weakneſs of memory, and if I may ſay ſo, on the ſeeming caprice of this faculty, before we were made ſenſible of it by repeated experiences. The ideas that are lodged there begin to fade almoſt as ſoon as they are framed. They are continually ſlipping from us, or ſhifting their forms; and if the objects that excited ſome did not often renew them, and if we had not a power to recall others before they are gone too far out of the mind, we ſhould loſe our ſimple, and much more our complex ideas, and all our notions would become confuſed and obſcure. The mind would be little more than a channel through which ideas, and notions glided from entity into nonentity. But our caſe is not ſo bad. They are often renewed, and we can recall them as often as we pleaſe. There is, however, a difference between the renewing of them, and the recalling of them. When ideas are renewed by the ſame objects that excited them firſt in the mind, they are renewed ſuch as they were. The light

light and heat of the ſun will cauſe the ſame ſenſations, and ſtronger perhaps of the ſame kind, in the man who has not ſeen one nor felt the other in many years, than they cauſed in him formerly. Juſt ſo any operation, or affection of the mind, which has been long unperceived, will appear the ſame it uſed to appear to our inward ſenſe, when it is perceived anew by reflection. But when we are forced to recall our complex ideas, the caſe is not the ſame, at leaſt when they are ſuch as are not in common uſe. Thoſe of mixed modes and relations, for inſtance, that philoſophers ſometimes employ, and to which the mind ſcarce ever adverts on other occaſions, may well receive ſome alteration even when they are recalled readily, tho this alteration is the leſs perceptible, perhaps, on account of that very readineſs with which they are recalled. But when they are recalled with difficulty, and dragged back ſlowly, as it were, and by pieces and parcels into the mind, it is no wonder if they receive much greater alteration. They are then in ſome ſort recompounded, and tho this may be for the better as well as for the worſe, yet ſtill they vary, and every variation of them begets ſome uncertainty and confuſion in our reaſoning. Thus it muſt be, when beſides our ſimple ideas, ſuch numberleſs collections of ſimple and complex ideas, and ſuch numberleſs combinations of all theſe into notions, are to be held together and to be preſerved in their order by ſo weak a mental faculty as that of retention.

Names indeed are given to ſignify all our ideas and all our notions to ourſelves and to others, and to help the memory in meditation as well as in diſcourſe. When they are aſſigned to complex ideas, they are meant as knots according to the very proper image Mr. Locke gives of them, to tie each ſpecific bundle of ideas together: and in theſe reſpects they are not only uſeful, but neceſſary. It happens, however, that

names, far from having theſe effects, have ſuch very often as are quite contrary to theſe. Whilſt we retain the names of complex ideas and notions, we imagine that we retain the ideas and notions; but the ideas and notions ſhift and vary, whilſt the names remain the ſame. The ſcene of the mind, like a moving picture, muſt be governed with attention, that it may bring into our view the images we want, and as we want them. Otherwiſe ideas that are foreign to our actual train of thinking will frequently ruſh into our thoughts, and become objects of them whether we will or no. But there is another and a greater miſchief which will flow from this conſtitution of the mind, unleſs the utmoſt attention be employed, and often when it is. The former is a ſort of violence, which cannot be offered unperceived, and may be therefore reſiſted. This that I am going to mention ſteals ſo ſilently upon us, that we do not perceive it very often even when it has worked it's effect. When we recall our ideas and notions, whether this be done with eaſe or difficulty, we review them in ſome ſort: and if they are more liable to have been altered, we have a better chance for perceiving any alteration that may have been made in the determination of them. But when the ideas and notions we want preſent themſelves, as it were of themſelves, to the mind, under their uſual names and appearances, we are apt to employ them without examination, and perhaps we advert very often to nothing more than the word by which we are uſed to ſignify them. In this manner our ideas and notions become unſteady imperceptibly, and I would not anſwer that ſomething may not happen to me of this kind, even in writing this eſſay, tho I am on my guard againſt it. How much more muſt it happen to thoſe who are not thus on their guard?

Every man imagines that his ideas and notions are his own in every ſenſe, but every man almoſt deceives himſelf in this caſe. When we learn the names of complex ideas and notions, we ſhould accuſtom the mind to decompound them, as I believe it has been obſerved already, that we may verify theſe, and ſo make them our own, as well as learn to compound others. But very few are at this trouble, and the general turn of education is contrived to keep men from taking it. Bred to think as well as ſpeak by rote, they furniſh their minds, as they furniſh their houſes or cloath their bodies, with the fancies of other men, and according to the mode of the age and country. They pick up their ideas and notions in common converſation, or in their ſchools. The firſt are always ſuperficial, and both are commonly falſe. Theſe are defects in the firſt determination of our ideas and notions, and if we join to theſe the obſtinacy and negligence that become habitual in moſt men, we ſhall find no reaſon to be ſurprized that abſurd opinions are tenaciouſly embraced, and wildly and inconſiſtently defended. Uniformity of ideas in error would have, at leaſt, this advantage: error would be more eaſily detected and more effectually exploded.

But ſuppoſing the contrary of all this, ſuppoſing our ideas and notions to have been determined truly, and preſerved ſteadily, we muſt not flatter ourſelves, that we are quite ſecure againſt the evil conſequence that is obſerved in this place to flow from the imperfect conſtitution of the human mind. The very temper of the mind, a little too much remiſſneſs, or a little too much agitation, affections that are grown up, or paſſions that are inflamed, may occaſion ſome alteration in our ideas and notions, in the very moment that we employ them. If it be ſmall, it will be unperceived by us. If it be great,

great, the affection or paſſion that cauſed it will excuſe it, perhaps juſtify it to us. But however ſmall and almoſt imperceptible, even to a cool mind that is on it's guard againſt it's own weakneſs, ſuch alterations may be, each in itſelf; yet beſides that, each of them may produce others, each of them, tho ſmall in the idea, or notion, may become of great conſequence in the courſe of that reaſoning, wherein this idea or notion is frequently employed, or which turns perhaps upon it. A few ideas, or parts of ideas, that ſlip out of the bundle of covetouſneſs, make it the bundle of frugality: and a few, added to that of frugality, make it the bundle of covetouſneſs.

Thus it happens when we diſcourſe with ourſelves. But when we diſcourſe with others, the difficulty doubles; for beſides that of maintaining a ſteady determination of our own ideas and notions, we have the additional difficulty very often of communicating, and always of maintaining the ſame ſteady determination in thoſe of another. This is our caſe; that of every one in his turn, not only when mixed modes and relations, but in ſome degree, even when ſubſtances are our objects: and I perſuade myſelf that you have been more than once ready to laugh or cry, in the midſt of ſeveral rational creatures, who talked of things quite different, called them by the ſame names, and imagined that they talked of the ſame things. The choirs of birds who whiſtle and ſing, or ſcream at one another, or the herds of beaſts who bleat and lowe, or chatter and roar at one another, have juſt as much meaning, and communicate it juſt as well. At leaſt I preſume ſo, for I can affirm of no ſpecies but my own. All of them ſeem to have ideas, and theſe ſeem often to be better determined in the birds and beaſts, than in men. All of them ſeem to have, in theſe loud converſations, ſome general meaning.

ing. But none of them ſeem to have that preciſion, order, and connection of ideas and notions, which can alone make up rational diſcourſe.

Such is the common converſation, ſuch the ordinary correſpondence of men with one another. Such too for the moſt part are all the public diſcourſes that are held, and the ſolemn harangues of the pulpit. But the matter grows ſtill worſe when any controverſy is concerned. Tho truth be one, and every neceſſary truth be obvious enough, yet that there muſt be various opinions about it among creatures conſtituted as we are, is as certain as that there are ſuch opinions. Truth however is ſeldom the object, as reaſon is ſeldom the guide; but every man's pride, and every man's intereſt requires that both ſhould be thought to be on his ſide. From hence all thoſe diſputes, both public and private, which render the ſtate of ſociety a ſtate of warfare, the warfare of tongues, pens and ſwords. In that of the two firſt, with which alone we have to do here, diſputes become conteſts for ſuperiority between man and man, and party and party, inſtead of being what they ſhould be, compariſons of opinions, of facts and reaſons; by which means each ſide goes off with triumph, and every diſpute is a drawn battle. This is the ordinary courſe of controverſy, not among the vulgar alone, but among ſage philoſophers and pious divines, whoſe conduct is not more edifying than that of the vulgar. Will it be pretended that the ſchools of religion and learning have, in this reſpect, any advantage over other public aſſemblies, over coffee-houſes and taverns? If it is, we may ſafely deny it; becauſe we can eaſily prove the contrary. In vain will it be urged, that men who have much learning, and who are accuſtomed to inveſtigate, and to fix the moſt abſtruſe and momentous truths, muſt of courſe, and even without ſuperior parts, be better able nicely to diſ-

cern, to determine, and to compare and to connect ideas and notions, than those who neither possess the same learning and the same habits, nor have the same art of reasoning. This may be in some respects true, but upon the whole it is not so: and a plain man would overwhelm the scholar who should hold this language, by shewing, in numerous instances, the weakness of the human mind, that of this very scholar perhaps in some; the narrow confines, and in them the instability of our ideas and notions, the impertinence of logic, the futility of metaphysics, the blasphemy of divinity, and the fraud of disputation.

The best, and even such as pass for the fairest controversial writers, improve by artifice the natural infirmity of the human mind, and do on purpose what is here lamented as an evil not always to be avoided. They confound ideas, and perplex the significations of their signs, so as may serve best the intention, not of discovering truth, but of having the last word in the dispute. This practice is so common, and especially where favorite interests, and on their accounts favorite tenets, are concerned, that I think no writings of this sort can be produced, wherein it is not employed, more or less, on both sides. How indeed should it be otherwise, when skill in disputation is esteemed a great part of learning, and the most scandalous frauds are applauded under the name of subtilty? Whatever excites men to it, whether pride, or self-interest, or habitual and inveterate prepossession and bigotry, by which they are induced to think, that the worst means may be employed to serve the best cause, which is always the cause they have embraced, it is fraud still. It is pious fraud, if you please: I would rather call it theological; but the doctor who shifts the idea, and keeps the word appropriated to it, that he may serve any purpose, is as arrant a cheat as the saint who

interpreted the ſame paſſage of ſcripture in different ſenſes, according to the different opinions his orthodoxy required him to oppoſe. We may lament the imperfections of the human mind, we may blame thoſe who do not give their attention to frame, and to preſerve their ideas and notions with all the exactneſs neceſſary to make them materials of knowledge, not of error. But we have a right to abominate thoſe who do their utmoſt to render the diſcovery of truth impracticable, to perpetuate controverſy, and to pervert the uſe and deſign of language. I prefer ignorance to ſuch learning, SWIFT's Bagatelle to ſuch philoſophy, and the diſputes of a club where it does not prevail, to thoſe of an academy or univerſity where it does.

IT is, in truth, in thoſe places, and wherever metaphyſics and theology have been made ſciences, that the arts of controverſial legerdemain are practiſed with moſt licence, dexterity, and ſucceſs. Ideas of corporeal ſubſtance are not ſo liable to vary, nor ſo expoſed to perplexity and confuſion by the abuſe of words, as the ideas that we have, or rather that we ſuppoſe we have, of thinking ſubſtance. Every complex idea of any corporeal ſubſtance is not the ſame preciſe collection of ſimple ideas in every mind. But the moſt ſenſible of it's qualities, thoſe that are the moſt obvious to us according to the buſineſs we have with it, ſuch as mark moſt, and diſtinguiſh enough, are put together in every mind. The peaſant has not the ſame idea of gold as the miner, nor the miner as the chemiſt. This will be ſaid, and it will be ſo far true, that the chemiſt will have more ideas of qualities co-exiſting in this metal than the miner, and the miner more than the peaſant. But the collection of ſimple ideas in the mind of him who has feweſt will be ample, and diſtinct enough to fix the ſort there, and to anſwer all his purpoſes: and, as long as na-

ture maintains theſe collections of ſenſible qualities, the ideas of them can be neither confounded, nor loſt. As long as gold, and iron, and men, and horſes are in the world, their complex ideas will exiſt in human minds invariably : and tho they may be more complex in ſome than in others, yet the additional ideas that encreaſe, will not alter the collection enough to beget any material ambiguity.

The caſe is widely different when thinking ſubſtance becomes the object of our contemplation, when philoſophers pretend by a ſuppoſed ſcience, not only to ſpiritualize matter in ſome ſort, if you will allow me to expreſs myſelf ſo, and to conſider forms abſtracted from all matter, incorporeal eſſences and intelligible natures; but to reaſon and dogmatize about immaterial ſpirits, and to make ſouls, for inſtance, as many as they want, ſouls for the world, for men, for all other animals, and for vegetables, ſouls rational and irrational, ſouls immaterial, and ſouls of ſo fine a texture, that they approach immateriality, tho they are material. All ſuch ideas and notions, and all ſuch as are framed concerning them, are ill determined, and conſequently ill preſerved. Uncertain in their origin, they muſt needs be unſteady in their progreſs, and in the uſe that philoſophers and divines make of them. Our ideas of corporeal ſubſtances are, no doubt, inadequate and ſuperficial, and ſuch as cannot reach the eſſence of any one particular ſubſtance; but they reach far enough for our uſe: and as far as this uſe is concerned, nay even a little further, the ſyſtem of corporeal ſubſtances lies open to us. They are criterions in our power; and according to them we verify, correct, and maintain by obſervation and experience, as we acquire, the preciſe determinations of our ideas of them. But when we proceed from phyſics to that which is called metaphyſics, and pretend to knowledge of general natures and im-

material beings, what do we leſs than pretend to general knowledge, where we are not capable of having even particular knowledge, properly ſo called? and to particular knowledge, where we have no criterion ſufficient to verify, correct, and maintain all the ideas and notions that we put together, in order to compoſe ſomething that paſſes for it? The ſole criterion we have of immaterial ſpirit is our own ſpirit. The idea we have of thought by reflection, is as clear as that we have of extenſion by ſenſation. The ideas we have of ſome few modes of thinking, are as clear as thoſe we have of numberleſs modes of extenſion. So far then we have a criterion, by which to judge of the immaterial ſpirits we are pleaſed to create. I call them the creatures of metaphyſics and theology; becauſe in truth, conſidered as diſtinct ſubſtances, they are ſuch. All ſpirits are hypothetical, except the infinite ſpirit, the father of ſpirits, the ſupreme Being. But how confined is this criterion that extends no wider, nor riſes any higher than the narrow confines, wherein we have perceptions of the operations of our own minds? They afford much room for imagination, and few means of knowledge. Our ideas of knowledge and power for inſtance, that ariſe from the perceptions we have of our own ſpirits, are applicable to them, and triable by them. But as ſoon as metaphyſicians and divines preſume to apply them improperly, to reaſon concerning the knowledge of the ſupreme Being on thoſe of the firſt ſort, which have in this application no criterion; and to reaſon concerning the liberty of man on thoſe of the ſecond ſort, without a due regard to what we experience in ourſelves, which is their true criterion; how vague, and how unſteady do all theſe ideas, and theſe notions we frame by them, become? Of how much incoherent diſcourſe, of how many repugnant opinions has not this abſurd manner of philoſophizing been productive? In a word, and to conclude this ſubject

here at leaſt, all our metaphyſical and theological ideas and notions are vague and unſteady as well as phantaſtical, for the moſt part, for want of criterions by which it is in our power to try them in the ſubjects about which we employ them, or for want of trying them by the criterions by which it is in our power to try them.

These inconveniences the lovers of truth may eaſily avoid. We are under no obligation to be metaphyſicians or divines. But there is another inconveniency not ſo eaſy to be avoided on ſubjects more important, becauſe more real than thoſe commonly called metaphyſical and theological. The inconveniency I mean to ſpeak of here, and have referred to already, conſiſts in the difficulty of preſerving ſteadily ſome of our ideas and notions when they are well determined, rightly taken from the nature of things, and tried and approved by their proper criterions. Mathematical, as well as moral ideas and notions, are made by the mind: and tho ſuggeſted to it by ſenſible objects, yet both are properly creatures of the mind, and there they remain to be employed as architypes. Thus far both are in the ſame caſe. But the difference that follows is great in itſelf, and in it's conſequences. The mathematician can call his ſenſes in at every inſtant to aid his intellect; and by making his ideas become objects of his ſight, as he does when he draws diagrams that are copies of them on paper, he not only purſues ſteadily, but is able to communicate to others, demonſtrations which he could neither purſue, nor retain by the ſtrength of his mental faculties alone, nor explain to others by the help of words. Words are ſigns, not copies of ideas. An idea, a moral idea for inſtance, may be eſſentially changed, and the ſign that ſtood for it before may ſtand for it afterwards, without cauſing always an immediate perception in the mind of this change. But whenever

ever the leaſt change is made in any idea of which we have before our eyes an outward viſible copy, that change is perceived inſtantly; and the determination of ideas, which the mind is unable to maintain, is thus maintained by one of our ſenſes. Moral ideas and notions, therefore, of which no ſuch copies can be made, which are held together in the mind with the names aſſigned to them by nothing but the retentive power of the mind, and which can be ſignified by nothing but ſounds that bear no reſemblance to them, muſt fluctuate and vary, beget all the confuſion, ſpread all the obſcurity, and give occaſion to all the fraud I have mentioned.

Definitions, it has been ſaid, will prevent, or remedy this evil, and morality may be placed by the help of them "among "the ſciences capable of demonſtration." That the firſt and great principles of natural religion may be demonſtrated, and that ingenuous minds may be trained to make a juſt application of them in ſome particular caſes, I acknowledge. But that the preciſe meaning of moral words can be ſo fixed and maintained, that the congruity or incongruity of the ideas and notions they ſtand for ſhall be always diſcerned, clearly and uniformly, I do not believe. Definitions, therefore, conſiſting of words, they cannot anſwer Mr. Locke's purpoſe, as it would not be hard to ſhew in the very inſtances he brings. Intellect, the artificer, works lamely without his proper inſtrument, ſenſe; which is the caſe when he works on moral ideas. Whenever he can employ this inſtrument, and as far as it can ſerve him, which is the caſe when he works on mathematical ideas, he works ſecurely. I apprehend, therefore, that to expect a new method ſhould be ever found, of preſerving as ſteadily and invariably our moral ideas and notions, as we preſerve thoſe that are mathematical, is not very different from expecting that a method ſhould be found, ſome time or other, of rendering.

ing things, that are not objects of ſight by nature, viſible by art. Ideas and notions of virtue and vice, very clearly defined, have been often confounded by ſchoolmen and caſuiſts, in the moſt flagrant caſes. They are ſo ſtill by them and others in moſt diſcourſes, and in all diſputes about political or moral affairs. But no mathematician ever confounded the idea of any triangle with that of a ſquare, nor that of a ſquare with that of a circle.

SECT. V.

I HAVE dwelled the longer on complex ideas and notions, becauſe tho ſimple ideas are truly the firſt principles of all our knowledge, yet the complex ideas into which they are compounded by nature, and the complex ideas and notions into which we compound them by the operations of our minds, are the more ready and immediate principles on which we endeavor to eſtabliſh general knowledge. We could not attain it even in ſuch degrees as are proportionable to our wants, and to the deſign of infinite Wiſdom in making us what we are, in placing us where we are, and in giving us the faculties we have, without their aſſiſtance. If then theſe ideas and notions are ſo limited, as I have deſcribed them, by nature, and if we muſt often limit them ſtill more by judgment, that they may be ſtill more ſurely productive of real knowledge; if within this extent too they are ſo liable to be inacurately framed, unſteadily maintained, and uncertainly communicated, there will reſult from theſe conſiderations ſufficient reaſons to confound the pride of philoſophers, and to expoſe the vanity of much pretended ſcience. But theſe reaſons acquire ſtill greater force, when we add ſome further conſiderations to the former. The leſſon of nature, as I have called it, that is the information and inſtruction we gain by obſerving the conſtitution of our

our phyſical and moral ſyſtems, and the ſtate and courſe of things that exiſt conſtantly, or tranſiently in them, ends with our complex ideas and notions. When nature leaves us, we are forced to put ourſelves, in our ulterior progreſs towards general knowledge, under the conduct of her mimic, art: ſo that if our feet are apt to ſlip, if we totter in the way, and are ſubject to ramble out of it, whilſt nature is our guide, all this muſt needs happen much more when we have no other guide but art, and when we are reduced to ſupply natural imperfection by expedients. The truth is, the further we proceed under the conduct of art, the further we attempt to carry our thoughts beyond thoſe originals whereby nature, obtruding on ſenſe complex ideas of what does exiſt, and ſuggeſting ideas and notions of what may exiſt, informs and inſtructs the mind, the more liable we are to fall into error by framing our ideas and notions wrong, by preſerving unſteadily even thoſe that we frame right, by preſuming that we have ideas when we have really none, or that we know what we mean when we have no meaning at all. Metaphyſicians and divines have raiſed their reputations on little elſe: and it will be worth our while to examine the truth of this aſſertion in ſome few inſtances, among many that might be produced. I ſay, it will be worth our while, becauſe the errors in opinion, like the faults in conduct of the greateſt men, are of the worſt conſequence, and deſerve the moſt to be detected; becauſe theſe philoſophers, above all other men, have rendered the human mind the flatterer, the deceiver, and the debaucher of itſelf, "blanda adulatrix, et quaſi lena ſui." In ſhort, becauſe they have ſubſtituted mental artifice in the place of mental art, and have thereby encouraged mankind to continue ridiculouſly an imaginary progreſs in ſearch of ſcience, when nature and art are both at a ſtand.

How

How difficult, nay how impracticable the enlargement of knowledge, and communication of our thoughts to one another would be, if we remained abſolutely confined to particulars, and unleſs means were found of ſupplying this defect, is obvious to reflection. The mind, therefore, makes it's utmoſt efforts to generalize it's ideas, begins early with ſuch as are moſt familiar, comes in time to thoſe that are leſs ſo, and is never at reſt till it has found means of conceiving as well as it can it's ideas collectively, and of ſignifying them in that manner to others. Complex ideas are made by uniting ſeveral ſimple ideas that have often no connexity, nor relation to each other, except what the mind gives them, in one idea. General ideas, or notions are attempted by endeavoring to aſſemble in one a variety of ideas, or notions, that have a relation, or likeneſs to each other. Nature helps in the firſt of theſe operations, as we have obſerved above; and we perform it, or we may perform it, with ſucceſs. But ſhe affords us little or no help in the laſt; and we fail in the attempt. She ſhews us men, but not man in general, and the ſame may be ſaid of all other ſubſtances. She ſhews us, or we frame, ideas of particular figures; but neither does ſhe ſhew us, nor can we frame any idea of figure in general, nor general ideas of particular kinds of figure, any more than we can frame a general idea of ſubſtance, or of any particular kinds of ſubſtances. Once more, ſhe ſhews us particular actions, and inſtances of behavior of men towards men, or we frame ideas in our minds of ſuch particular actions, or inſtances of behavior, and we term them juſt, or unjuſt; but neither does ſhe ſhew us, nor can we frame any idea of moral or immoral in general, no nor any general idea of theſe particular kinds, juſt and unjuſt. The mind would make all theſe creatures if it could; but not having this natural power, an art is properly, and uſefully

employed to make particular ideas ſerve the purpoſes of general, by giving them the rank of architypes in the mind, and to make particular notions become general, by compriſing them in definitions that we refer to as to architypes of particular kinds. Thus knowledge, particular by nature, becomes in ſome degree general by art.

It would be abſurd to imagine, as ſome philoſophers have imagined, that nature caſts her productions in certain ſpecific moulds. But we may ſay, when we ſpeak of things as they appear to us, that they are claſſed in different ſorts, which we diſtinguiſh by our ſenſations. Our ſimple ideas are many, as many as the ſenſible qualities of outward objects that excite them in us. But the various combinations of theſe ſimple into complex ideas of ſubſtances are innumerable, and yet each of theſe combinations is as diſtinctly and uniformly perceived by us, as the ſimple ideas contained in it. By this it is, and without this it could not be, that both of them anſwer God's deſign, and man's uſe. If mankind in general did not receive the ſame impreſſions, and by theſe impreſſions the ſame ſenſations from outward objects, much confuſion and diſorder would ariſe in human life. Without troubling ourſelves to enquire like * Malebranche, whether the ſame motions of the fibres are conſtantly produced by the ſame objects, or whether the ſame ſenſations are conſtantly produced, and the ſame ideas excited in the ſoul by the ſame motions of the fibres, of all which he knew no more than ſuch ignorant men as you and I are; let us content ourſelves to underſtand this uniformity as it has been explained in the third ſection, and conformably to experience.

This

* Recher. de la Verité, lib. 1. c. 13.

This being eſtabliſhed, we may obſerve further, that the mind proceeds to generalize, in the utmoſt extent, the ſimple ideas it has got, tho not the complex ideas of ſubſtances; as if, the component ideas being generalized, men had perceived there was no need of generalizing the complex ideas compounded of them, and of ſomething whereof they had only an obſcure idea ſuggeſted to the mind by all their ſenſations, an idea of ſubſtance wherein the ſenſible qualities producing ſimple ideas inhered. In the caſe, therefore, of ſimple ideas we employ, to ſpeak the language of philoſophy, not only concrete but abſtract terms, and we ſay, for inſtance, not only that milk or ſnow is white, but we talk of whites in general, and ſignify them by the abſtract term whiteneſs. The adjective white, joined to a ſubſtantive, is the ſign of a particular idea, and neceſſary, therefore, as well as proper to be uſed in ſpeaking of particular ſubſtances, by every one of which it is determined. But the ſubſtantive whiteneſs is authoriſed by cuſtom alone, and is determined by nothing. It is a term invented by the art of the mind. When it is uſed, I perceive no determinate, ſpecific, general idea, wherein all the various tints of white which I have perceived, and many there may be which no human eye has ever perceived, are comprehended. I have no perception of a general idea of white abſtracted from every particular idea of this ſort. The idea I have, when this word is uſed, is always that of ſome particular white extenſion, or of ſeveral ſuch whoſe ideas ruſh confuſedly into the mind together.

In the caſe of ſubſtances, the art of the mind is not carried quite ſo far, tho it makes as we grow up, by obſervation and experience, ſome attempts of this kind towards general knowledge. The child who pratttled of papa and mama, of crop and

tray, advances in years, and talks of man and woman, of horſe and dog, and ſoon after of animal. He learns certain common names by which he ſignifies beings that appear to him alike, and give him nearly the ſame complex ideas. He learns another common name ſtill more comprehenſive, by which he ſignifies things that do not give him, even nearly, the ſame complex ideas, but that are confined however to the ſame claſs by ſome peculiar, ſimple ideas, and contradiſtinguiſhed by them from every other claſs more or leſs. The words man, or animal, raiſe in his mind no general idea; but in this caſe, as in the former, ſome particular idea of man, which the mind can frame without thinking of ALEXANDER, or HENRY, riſes there, and becomes repreſentative of all men in general: or elſe ſeveral ideas of men, and other animals, ruſh confuſedly into the mind together; that is, ſo rapidly, that tho they are truly ſucceſſive, yet this ſucceſſion is imperceptible. Thus far the art of the mind is carried towards a general knowledge of ſubſtances, and cuſtom has authoriſed it no further. The ſchools indeed invented, among many other words to which they had no clear nor determinate ideas annexed, thoſe of humanity and animality. Now if nothing more had been intended by thoſe words than to ſignify, by one ſound, all that we underſtand when we ſpeak of the apparent natures of men and animals, ſuch as they appear to our ſenſes, I cannot ſee that they deſerved to be rejected, and I ſhall make no ſcruple to uſe them if the occaſion of doing ſo preſents itſelf. But if they are employed by any profound ontoſophiſt, as they were by the ſchoolmen, who pretended to have ſuch general ideas abſtracted from all particulars, ideas of general natures and real eſſences of ſubſtances; they deſerve to be rejected as much as the gobleity and fableity of PLATO, with which the cynic made himſelf ſo merry. Even the general names of ſimple ideas of ſenſation can be received,

according to my apprehenſion, in no ſenſe but the former: and whiteneſs, if we aſſumed that we had ſuch a general idea, abſtracted from all particulars, and adequate to the real eſſence of white, would deſerve to be exploded as much as humanity and animality. All theſe words muſt be confined to their proper uſe, and not applied to any other ſignification. In the firſt caſe they will be ſubſervient to an art, in the latter to an artifice of the mind.

The ſame caution that is to be had, when the mind generalizes it's ſimple and complex ideas of ſubſtances, is to be had, and the ſame diſtinction is to be made between general and abſtract ideas, in the ſenſe in which the latter are ſuppoſed by ſome philoſophers to be framed by the mind, when we employ words to ſignify our ideas of modes and relations. We ſay, for inſtance, not only that certain figures are triangular, but we diſcourſe of triangularity. We ſay not only that ſuch an action is juſt, but we diſcourſe of juſtice. We ſay not only that ſuch things are ſimular or like, but we diſcourſe of ſimilitude or likeneſs. We have not however any ideas of ſuch general natures abſtracted from all the particular ideas that we ſuppoſe to be comprehended in them. Theſe words triangularity, juſtice, likeneſs, recall to the mind ſome particular idea or notion of each ſort, or elſe a confuſion of particular ideas or notions, as was ſaid in the caſe of ſubſtances. They excite no other idea nor notion. But yet the difference between the two caſes is vaſt. Our ideas, and notions, of modes and relations, being creatures of the mind, tho we are unable to frame any that are not particular in their ſeveral kinds, and have by conſequence in our minds no idea nor notion, abſtracted and diſtinct from all the particular ideas and notions that the mind has framed of every kind; yet the real eſſence of each particular being the particular idea or notion that the mind

has framed, we are able to aſcertain by definitions, and to reduce into propoſitions, a general nature; of which every particular idea or notion does, and muſt partake, to be of that kind, that is, to be what it is. I do not know, and therefore I cannot define, nor advance propoſitions concerning ſubſtance in general, nor the real eſſence of any particular ſubſtance, nor by conſequence the manner in which, and qualities by which they produce the ſimple and complex ideas I receive from them; nor finally the conformity, if any ſuch there is, between all theſe ideas and their architypes. But I know, and can define the real eſſence of all triangles; which I name triangularity. Tho I have no idea of triangularity "abſtract-"ed with pains and ſkill from the ſeveral ſpecies of triangles, "and preſent to the mind independently of them," yet I know that this definition, "a ſpace included by three lines "that meet at three angles," contains in it the real eſſence of every particular triangle whereof I have the idea. A philoſopher may take as much pains as he pleaſes to abſtract from thoſe particulars wherein the ſpecies differ, and to retain thoſe only wherein they agree, which CUDWORTH calls the cutting off chips, as I remember; tho he frames, by this method, the definition I have mentioned, yet neither he who framed it, nor his ſcholar who learned it, will be able, I preſume, to conſider a "ſpace included by three lines that meet at three "angles," without having ſome particular triangle in his mind. If we had an abſtract idea of triangularity, properly ſo called, it might be ſaid to be the idea of all triangles; but it could not be ſaid, as it has been ſaid, to be the idea of none. In ſhort, we define the general nature of triangles on the conſideration of particular triangles: and this definition is a true propoſition in abſtract conſideration, tho it be not an abſtract idea. But to make it of any uſe, we muſt deſcend to particular knowledge again; that is, to particular, real

real ideas, which might have been purſued, tho the terms of this definition had never been invented.

THUS again, I know the general nature, the real eſſence of juſtice, and am able to define it in very clear propoſitions, tho I am not able to frame any general idea or notion of it abſtracted from all particulars, and containing them all. It is not, moſt certainly, to do as we would be done by; for that is more properly a definition of benevolence, than of juſtice, as every one, who conſiders the conſtant force and the occaſional injuſtice of ſelf-love muſt admit. But it conſiſts in a diſpoſition to give to every one what is his own, where there is property; to deal by others according to the natural fitneſs or unfitneſs of things where there is no property, and in other diſtinct notions, which will altogether amount to a definition, if we may be ſaid to define, when we only enumerate particular notions, and we can do nothing more when we ſet about to explain the general nature of juſtice; for which I may appeal to every man who has meditated well on this ſubject. To conclude; I know the general nature, and the real eſſence of likeneſs, and am able to explain it by a very ſhort definition; for it conſiſts in that relation which ariſes from an uniformity of appearance in things that are diſtinct in exiſtence. But ſtill I have no general idea nor notion of this relation, abſtracted from all my particular ideas of things ſo related *.

WHAT

* THESE diſputes about abſtraction may be deemed after all, perhaps, to be purely verbal. A looſe determination of the word idea may have given occaſion to them. A proper diſtinction between ideas, and notions, may help to reconcile them. Theſe two words are commonly uſed by inadvertency and habit, or authority, as if they were ſynonimous. Mr. LOCKE, and even his antagoniſt in this diſpute, the biſhop of Cloyne, have uſed them ſo. I have done the ſame in all I have writ to you. But I think that the example before us ſhews how neceſſary it is to diſtinguiſh them, in order to maintain a philoſophical preciſion of terms.

THE

What advances now do we make in general knowledge by this expedient which the art of the mind has invented? Not ſuch

The word idea ſhould, I preſume, be held to ſignify one ſingle perception of the mind, whether ſimple or complex, whether produced by the impreſſions of outward objects, or by the operations of our own minds, by ſenſation or reflection. Theſe ideas are preſerved in the memory by frequent repetitions of the ſame impreſſions, and the ſame operations. But thoſe of them which can be painted, as it were, on the canvaſs of the mind, like ſingle objects of internal ſight, and like pictures of the original impreſſions which were made on it, or of the original forms which were raiſed in it, are beſt preſerved and moſt ſteadily determined. They are all particular, and have no generality but that of application. They repreſent to the mind that which does, or may exiſt. Of that which neither does, nor can exiſt, we can have no idea. The ideal man, or the ideal horſe, which the mind perceives, is a particular idea that repreſents all the men, and all the horſes that exiſt, or ever did exiſt; and the ideal triangle is as truly a particular idea that repreſents all the triangles that exiſt, or can exiſt in the mind, or out of it. The mind indeed has a power of varying, without deſtroying the idea, for inſtance, it adds wings to the man, and to the horſe, one becomes an angel, the other an hypogriph: and as it can repreſent the ideal man to be white or black, crooked or ſtrait, ſo it can repreſent the triangle to be rectangle, oblique, equilateral, equicrural, or ſcalenon. Thus far the mind can generalize it's ideas, and I think myſelf ſure that mine can generalize them no further. But when we have been accuſtomed to call every thing an idea, that is an object of the mind in thinking, we fall eaſily into that confuſion of language, whereby men are led very often, as I apprehend that they are in the preſent caſe, to diſpute, and to mean the ſame thing. We might avoid it, I preſume, if we diſtinguiſhed between ideas and notions, if we conceived the former to be particular in their nature, and general only by their application, and the latter to be general in their nature, and particular only by their application; in ſhort, if we conſidered how notions ſucceed ideas, and how they become the immediate inſtruments of general knowledge, when theſe can be ſuch no longer. Particular ideas of actual, or poſſible exiſtence, are made general in ſome ſort, that is, in their effect, as it has been ſaid, and as it is allowed on all hands. But the power of generalizing ideas is ſo inſufficient, that it goes no further. We make one phantaſme of a man ſtand for all men, and one of an horſe for all horſes; but here our progreſs by ideas, that is, by ſingle perceptions of the mind, ſtops. We have none of humanity, nor of horſeity, and much leſs have we any of animality. Juſt ſo the phantaſme of a particular triangle ſtands for every triangle of that ſpecies, but we have no idea of triangularity, and much leſs of figure. We make a particular ſtand for a general idea in this caſe, as in the two former; but in no caſe can we make ideas that are particular, and that can repreſent only what does, or may exiſt, become ideas of general natures that cannot exiſt. There is however a great difference between caſes of the former, and

caſes

ſuch as philoſophers would have believed, but ſome however. Tho we cannot by any power of the mind frame ideas of general natures and eſſences, which neither do nor can exiſt ſeparately from particulars, yet is it ſome advance to be able to comprehend, under one conſideration, a great number of particulars, by appropriating general names to the ſeveral lots, if the term may be allowed me, into which the mind has ſorted it's ideas and notions. The expedient facilitates extremely, as every man who thinks muſt obſerve, not only the communication of our thoughts to others, but the progreſs of them in their ſeveral trains, and all the operations of the mind about it's ideas; for tho theſe general names have no abſtract ideas annexed to them, nor, ſtrictly ſpeaking, any ideas or notions, yet are they not unaccompanied by ideas and notions. That would be to have no meaning at all,

caſes of the latter kind. The eſſences of ſubſtances are abſolutely unknown to us, but the eſſences of complex modes are perfectly known, ſo that we have clear and diſtinct notions, tho we cannot have clear and diſtinct ideas, nor indeed any ideas at all of them. From the contemplation of particular triangles we collect a notion of their general nature. We do more; by contemplating the various terminations of finite extenſion, we collect a notion of the general nature of figure. We have ideas of theſe no more than we have ideas of humanity or animality, but we know what we mean, and are able to explain our meaning when we ſpeak of theſe, which we are not when we ſpeak of the others.

Much more might be ſaid to ſhew the difference between complex ideas and notions, and between general and abſtract ideas, and the advantage that thoſe (in the conception of which, internal ſenſe, and in the communication of which, external ſenſe help intellect) have over ſuch as are meerly objects of intellect. I might expoſe, even to ridicule, the ſtir that is made about the pains and ſkill our maſters pretend that they take to form the ſuppoſed idea of triangularity, for inſtance, that they may teach their ſcholars to know a triangle when they ſee it; tho the meaneſt of their ſcholars, who have been uſed to contemplate particular triangles, will have made this notable diſcovery, "that every triangle is a ſpace "comprehended by three lines, and containing three angles," without any help of theirs, or ſkill or pains of his own. All the merit of our maſters ſeems to be this, they begin to learn at the right, they begin to teach at the wrong end; which is an obſervation that may be enforced by what Mr. Locke himſelf ſays about maxims

all, whereas they have a meaning, a plain and uſeful meaning or intention. What they have not, they borrow. They create no ideas in the mind, but they give occaſion to the mind to collect and apply ſuch ideas and notions as are there already. They call them forth, they marſhal them, as it were, and by the manner in which, and, by the occaſions on which they do ſo, theſe names produce all the effect they are deſigned to produce, and carry us towards general knowledge, as far as our feeble intellect can crawl with their aſſiſtance, and much further than we could advance without it.

I THINK I have ſaid nothing here which is not obvious and plain, and yet I have oppoſed, in almoſt all I have ſaid, men of the greateſt name in philoſophy. But when we muſt oppoſe them, or bely intuitive knowledge, there is no reaſon to heſitate. I know that, tho I can make ſome abſtractions of my ideas, I am utterly unable to make ſuch abſtractions as Mr. LOCKE and other great maſters of reaſon have taken it for granted that they could and did make. This I know as intuitively, and as certainly, as I know that I exiſt. If the difference lay in the degree alone, I ſhould readily acknowledge that other men might abſtract better, and further than myſelf. But I am conſcious that there is no ſuch power in my mind in any degree, and therefore I conclude, ſince we are all made of the ſame clay, a little coarſer or a little finer, that there is no ſuch power in their minds. I conclude, after my lord BACON, that, " ſince abſtract ideas have been intro-
" duced, and their dignity exalted with ſo much confidence
" and authority, the dreaming part of mankind has in a man-
" ner prevailed over the waking." If Mr. LOCKE could dream he had ſuch a power as he deſcribes this of abſtracting to be (a power to form with " ſome pains and ſkill the ge-
" neral idea of a triangle," for inſtance, " neither oblique,

" nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor ſcalenon, " but all, and none of theſe at once *") let writers learn to be leſs dogmatical, and readers to be leſs implicit. It is undeniable that there is ſuch a thing as philoſophical delirium. Men of the cooleſt tempers, we ſee, are liable to be ſeized by it, and when they are ſo, even their minds are apt to flatter, to deceive, and to debauch themſelves. I quote this as an inſtance of the mind's being debauched, as well as flattered and deceived; for ſurely it is a ſort of debauchery to turn art into artifice: and he does no leſs, whether he means it or not, who, inſtead of employing general words for the purpoſes we have mentioned, vends them for ſigns of ideas abſtracted as no mortal could ever abſtract.

Since knowledge has encreaſed, their own knowledge and that of other men, philoſophers and divines have been forced to moderate their pretenſions. They have fallen a little in the value they had ſet on human intellect: and I ſuſpect, or rather I would hope, that they muſt fall a good deal more, how unwilling ſoever they may be to part with that tinſel, which has paſſed ſo long for gold and ſilver. But there is ſtill a remainder of the old leaven in philoſophy. Many opinions that were aſſumed without any proof, or on the ſlighteſt, are ſtill entertained as opinions, or eſtabliſhed as doctrines. Among theſe groſs errors there is ſcarce any more groſs, or of more extenſive influence, than this that ſuppoſes a power in the mind, which the mind has not, and the reality of ideas of general natures, tho theſe cannot exiſt abſtractedly from particulars. This error is the great principle on which many fine-ſpun logical and metaphyſical ſpeculations proceed, and from moſt of which we might be delivered, to the honor of common ſenſe, the improvement of real knowledge, and the advantage of mankind, if it was ſuf-

* Eſſay l. 4. c 7.

ſufficiently exploded. Till it is ſo, and as long as the leaven of this error among others continues to ferment, men will be apt to miſpend their time in ſearch of fantaſtic knowledge, by the means of imaginary powers. The field of knowledge, which BACON, and DES CARTES, and LOCKE have purged of ſo many weeds, may be therefore over-run again by a new crop ſpringing from old roots that they neglected to grub, or helped to preſerve. Metaphyſics may not only maintain, but confirm and enlarge their empire. The lofty madneſs of PLATO, and the pompous jargon of ARISTOTLE, may be propagated again, with as great ſucceſs as ever, from thoſe colleges and ſchools that deſerved once the name of venerable bedlams. The learned of another generation may ſee, perhaps univerſally, immaterial eſſences and eternal ideas in the divine mind; they may contemplate ſubſtantial forms, and comprehend even the entelechia, whilſt they neither ſee viſible, nor feel ſolid extenſion. All this may happen, and if dullneſs ſhould re-eſtabliſh her empire in poetry, whilſt that of madneſs is reſtored in philoſophy, how glorious an age may the next become, when all the defects, and all the follies of this are complete? Once more, all this may happen. Our learned queen intereſts herſelf in nice and ſubtil diſputations about ſpace: from metaphyſics ſhe riſes to theology. She attends frequently to the controverſy, almoſt fourteen hundred years old, and ſtill carried on with as much warmth, and as little ſucceſs as ever, about that profound myſtery the Trinity. She ſtudies with much application the "analogy of "revealed religion to the conſtitution and courſe of nature." She underſtands the whole argument perfectly, and concludes, with the right reverend author, that it is not "ſo clear a caſe "that there is nothing in revealed religion." Such royal, ſuch lucrative encouragement muſt needs keep both metaphyſics and the ſublimeſt theology in credit; and in ſhort,

"Signs following ſigns, lead on the mighty year."

In the mean time, let what has been here ſaid ſtand for one example of the arts employed by the mind to enlarge it's knowledge, and let it ſerve to ſhew how theſe arts degenerate into artifice, deceive even the mind that invented them, and, inſtead of enlarging knowledge, enlarge and multiply error.

ANOTHER example of the ſame kind it may be proper to conſider. HOBBES ſays ſomewhere, that words are the counters of wiſemen, and the money of fools. The obſervation is juſt, and the expreſſion happy. Ideas and notions are the money of wiſemen, and they pay with theſe; whilſt they mark and compute with words, the money of fools. But yet ſo difficult is the intellectual commerce, ſo narrow the intellectual fund, that the wiſeſt men are frequently obliged to employ their money like counters, and their counters like money; in one caſe, however, without loſs, in the other without fraud. We may be ſaid to do the firſt, that is, to employ our money like counters, when we employ ideas of one kind to mark and ſuggeſt ideas of another. We employ, as it were, in this caſe, good and current money of one ſpecies, to compute and fix the ſum payable in another: and thus guineas may ſtand in the place of ſhillings, or ſhillings ſerve to repreſent guineas. This happens whenever we make uſe of figures, and figures are ſo interwoven into language, that they make up a great part of our diſcourſe, and a greater than is commonly apprehended.

THE figurative ſtile is peculiarly that of poets, or of the tribe neareſt allied to theirs, I mean orators. In this ſtile the frightened wave returns: or CICERO, in his Philippics, thunders againſt ANTHONY. To employ this ſtile with true propriety is hard no doubt. It muſt needs be hard to keep up an

an exact preciſion and propriety of ideas and words, when two ſets of each are concerned, ſince it is extremely ſo to keep them up, when one ſet of each is alone the buſineſs of the mind. It is hard for another reaſon; becauſe imagination, whoſe talents are neither preciſion nor propriety, not the former at leaſt, is employed in the application of one of theſe ſets of ideas and words to the other, and becauſe it rarely happens that great heat of imagination, and great coolneſs of judgment, that happy aſſociation which forms a genius, and appears eminently in all your writings, go together, and keep pace with one another. When they do ſo, the figurative ſtile, that ſome of our neighbours have almoſt rejected even out of poetry, and that we have abuſed moſt licentiouſly in it, ſerves to enforce, as well as to explain and adorn, but never to deceive. Somebody has ſaid of the boldeſt figure in rhetoric, the hyperbole, that it lies without deceiving: and, if I may venture to make a little alteration, in a definition given by my lord BACON, I will ſay of rhetoric in general, the practice of which I eſteem much, the theory little, that it applies images, framed or borrowed by imagination, to ideas and notions which are framed by judgment, ſo as to warm the affections, to move the paſſions, and to determine the will; ſo as to aſſiſt nature, not to oppreſs her.

BUT beſides the uſe which poets make with ſome profuſion, as they have a right to do, and orators make, or ſhould make more ſparingly, of this art of the mind, which, transferring ideas from one ſubject to another, makes that become graceful and reaſonable, and thereby uſeful when the application is judicious, which would be monſtrous and abſurd, and thereby hurtful without it; there is another uſe, which the ſevereſt philoſophical writers may and do make of it in their meditations,

tions, as well as in their diſcourſes; an uſe that if it does not ſerve to increaſe, ſerves moſt certainly to facilitate and propagate knowledge. They who meditate (for every man, and probably every animal thinks) muſt have obſerved, that the mind employs all it's forces, and memory and imagination among the reſt, not only to form opinions, or to arrive at knowledge, but to ſet the objects of opinion, or knowledge, in the fulleſt and cleareſt light for its own ſatisfaction, and for the eaſe of communicating theſe thoughts to other minds in the ſame order, and with the ſame energy as they are contemplated by it. Not only judgment compares in a ſteady train, ideas and notions that are preſent to it and thoſe that are intermediate, thoſe that ſagacity diſcovers to help the proceſs of comparing; but memory and the faculty of imagining are employed to bring in adventitious helps. Such they may be called, for tho foreign ideas divert the attention of the mind, when they break in unſought and by violence, they help it often when they have been ſought and are admitted by choice. They lead the mind, indirectly and round about as it were, in many caſes, to ſuch truths, or to ſuch evidence of truth as could not have been attained ſo eaſily, nor ſo fully without them.

Mr. Locke, in the preface to his famous eſſay, as he entitled it with great modeſty, ſince it is ſurely the moſt complete work of this kind that any language can boaſt, excuſes himſelf for "dwelling long on the ſame argument ſometimes, and "for expreſſing it different ways, by alledging that ſome ob-"jects had need to be turned on every ſide; and that when "a notion is new, it is not one ſimple view of it that will gain "it admittance into every underſtanding, or fix it there with "a clear and laſting impreſſion—— that our underſtandings "are no leſs different than our palates;" and more to the ſame purpoſe. Now if it be neceſſary to preſent our notions

to the view of others in ſeveral lights, and under variety of expreſſions, I cannot ſee why they ſhould not be ſometimes viewed thro the medium of figure; nor why the palates of thoſe who reliſh this ſtile ſhould not be gratified. Mr. Locke gratifies them in this very place, and in moſt pages of his work. What is the juxta-poſition of ideas? what is that chain which connects, by intermediate ideas that are the links of it, ideas that are remote, but figurative ſtile? what elſe are thoſe dormant, that is, ſleeping pictures, which are wakened as it were, and brought into appearance by an act of the mind? what elſe are the pictures drawn there, but laid in fading colors, or the images calcined to duſt by the flames of a fever? His invective therefore, againſt figurative ſpeech, in his chapter of the abuſe of words, muſt be underſtood not of the uſe, but of the abuſe of this ſtile, tho it ſeems to go further, or it will not be agreeable to his own practice, nor to the truth as I imagine. Falſe eloquence there is no doubt, and fraudulent eloquence too. Figurative ſtile often cauſes one, and is often employed by the other; but there is falſe and fraudulent reaſoning too without eloquence: and we may find as much trifling and fallacy in ſome of the moſt dry didactic writings, as can be ſhewn in thoſe of poets and orators.

Rhetoric may be a powerful inſtrument of deceit and error, and ſo may logic too. Both of them are impertinent when they are reduced into arts, and are cultivated and followed as ſuch. But if rhetoric were baniſhed out of the world, and logic with it, eloquence and reaſon would ſtill remain. Mr. Locke ſays very figuratively, and very eloquently, ſpeaking againſt figure and eloquence, that they have "like the fair-ſex too prevailing beauties, to be ſpoken a-"gainſt." He could not ſpeak againſt them out of their language. How ſhould he? We may diſaffect eloquence as much

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as we pleaſe, or nature may have ſaved us this trouble by refuſing us the talent, but we muſt ceaſe to ſpeak if we lay figurative ſpeech wholly aſide. Figures are ſo neceſſary in the communication, at leaſt, of our thoughts, that they are wove into the very conſtitution of language, as we have obſerved already. If we did not chuſe, we ſhould be forced to employ them often in common converſation about common objects, and the ordinary affairs of life; and they are ſtill more neceſſary, when ſubjects more abſtruſe and more abſtracted from ſenſible objects are concerned.

God alone knows how nearly external and internal ſenſe, of which we have one common perception, tho the objects be different, and tho the latter be occaſioned and limited by the former, are allied. All that will ever be ſaid to explain it, will explain no more than all that has been ſaid already. But however, to aſſert that there is no other ſource of ideas but ſenſation, is to aſſert ſomething moſt evidently falſe; for to explain what has been touched already, or hinted at leaſt, we have as determinate, and as clear ideas of thought, as of extenſion or ſolidity; of our inward faculties, of their operations, and of the modes of thinking, as of the powers, the actions, and the modifications of mere body. Were it otherwiſe, we ſhould have no intellectual ideas at all; for ideas, if they cannot be repreſented in thought without corporeal images, are not ſuch moſt certainly. But now, tho corporeal images have nothing to do in framing, they have much to do, and bear a principal part in communicating intellectual ideas. I ſay a principal part only, for ſome of theſe are ſignified without their help. We ſay, that we perceive, diſcern, abſtract, compound, or compare our ideas; but we ſay too, that we think, and that we know. The former expreſſions, and a multitude of others, are taken from outward and applied figu-

ratively to inward ſenſations. The latter, and ſome few others perhaps, ſignify immediately, and without any figure, the intellectual idea they are deſigned to ſignify.

If we aſk how all this comes to paſs, the true anſwer ſeems obvious enough. By an art, which experience has ſuggeſted to the mind. The ideas of outward objects have their criterions in theſe objects. Body is the architype of corporeal ideas, and this criterion therefore is common to all mankind. But intellectual ideas having no ſenſible, have no ſuch common criterion. He who had firſt ideas of extenſion and ſolidity, and who invented the words, could explain his meaning by appealing to the ſenſes of other men. But he could not communicate his ideas of reflection by the ſame ſhort and eaſy method, the paſſion of his mind in receiving theſe ideas by ſenſation, nor the operations of his mind about them afterwards. He borrowed therefore corporeal images to expreſs them, and talked of perceiving, diſcerning, and ſo on, in the figurative ſtile. Thus we may conceive how men came to employ corporeal ideas, for the moſt part, to explain the intellectual phaenomena, and ſometimes to aſſiſt even their own reflections on them. The art was reaſonably invented, and uſefully employed. But it ſoon became artifice, as ſoon as philoſophers took into their heads to affect ſuch ſcience as they are incapable of attaining. Then it was that they employed, among many other expedients, the abſurd uſe of figures that figured no real ideas, nor any thing more than philoſophical dreams, and whimſies of overheated brains. The ſame practice has continued from that time to this, from Plato down to Malebranche, from Aristotle down to Leibnitz, from Plotinus and Jamblicus down to Agrippa and Fludd. It begins to grow out of date. Men require now ſomething more real than figure, more preciſe than alluſion, and more particular than

metaphyſical abſtractions. Philoſophers may write as ſublimely as they pleaſe about pneumatics, or the doctrine of ſpirits, and as profoundly as they pleaſe about ontology, or the doctrine of Being abſtracted from all being. They will be taken up for amuſement, like other writers of romance, and be laid aſide like them, when any thing more worthy of attention preſents itſelf to the mind.

It is time, indeed, that they ſhould be treated in this manner, and that men who betray themſelves ſhould impoſe no longer on others. When I ſay that they betray themſelves, I mean it particularly with regard to the inconſiſtency of their pretenſions and their practice. St. Austin ſays, ſomewhere or other, for I quote the paſſage from the logic of Port-royal, that "men are ſo accuſtomed ſince the fall to conſider corporeal things alone, the images of which come into the brain by the ſenſes, that moſt of them believe they cannot conceive a thing when they cannot repreſent it to themſelves under a corporeal image." Such an one, I ſuppoſe, was the logician, who for want of enlarging his definition of idea to whatever is an object of the mind in thinking, or for want of ſupplying this defect by a true definition of notion, which would have been better perhaps, was ſo abſurd, and ſo profane, as to advance that we conceive God under the image of a venerable old man, becauſe we have no other ſenſible idea of him. But ſince the miſtaken belief ſpoken of by St. Austin is owing to cuſtom, and is that of moſt men only, I would aſk why ſo great a philoſopher, and ſaint, as he was, followed this evil cuſtom, and filled his works with more, and more forced applications of corporeal images to intellectual and divine ſubjects than any writer, perhaps, of that metaphoriſing and allegoriſing age? Shall we ſay with one of his diſciples, who in every other reſpect, and even in this was his equal

equal at leaſt, that " the ſoul is become ſince the fall as if " it were corporeal by inclination, and that the love it has for " things ſenſible diminiſhes conſtantly the union, or the rela- " tion it has to things intelligible* ?" But beſides that one of theſe fathers aſcribes to a fatal neceſſity, what the other aſcribes only to an ill habit, how can this happen to thoſe extraordinary men, who abſtract their ſouls from every thing material, and wrap themſelves up in pure intellect ſo frequently, altho they confeſs that " the mind depends in ſome ſort on a portion " of matter ?" How can it happen to ſouls that are " united " with the ſupreme mind immediately, and in a moſt intimate " manner, tho the diſtance between them be infinite †?"

ORDINARY men may be content to make the moſt of the commerce they find eſtabliſhed in their nature between ſenſe and intellect, to puſh their enquiries about mind as far, and no further than a few general notions which intuitive obſervation will juſtify, and in this proceſs, and in the communication of their intellectual ideas, to avail themſelves of corporeal ideas, and to make the little they know of body ſubſervient to the leſs that they can know of mind. This is enough, no doubt, for vulgar ſouls confined to material habitations, wherein they feel the weight of an heavy atmoſphere, and the malignity of an eaſterly blaſt. But it is not enough for thoſe who are raiſed above the vulgar, metaphyſicians by nature, divines by grace, " all whoſe ideas are to be found in the effi- " cacious ſubſtance of the divinity ††," and into whom " an " human ſoul, and a rational mind were inſinuated not to be " quickened, not to be bleſſed, not to be illuminated, except " by the very ſubſtance of God §." Theſe men are more

* RECHERCHE de la verité, l. 1. c. 13. † Ib. pref. †† RECHERCHE de la ver. l. 3. p. 2. c. 6. § Inſinuavit nobis Chriſtus animam humanam, et mentem rationalem non vegetari, non beatificari, non illuminari niſi ab ipsâ ſubſtantia Dei. Ib. cited from St. AUSTIN in JOAN. trac. 23.

converſant with intelligible than ſenſible beings, with the intellectual world over which they range, than with the material world whoſe exiſtence they deny ſometimes, and therefore it ſhould ſeem that it would have been more eaſy to them to have invented a metaphyſical language, than to have continued the uſe of words already appropriated to ideas as diſtant as thoſe of real beings from the entia rationis, or as thoſe of body from thoſe of ſpirit. It would have been likewiſe of extreme benefit to mankind, whom theſe philoſophers take ſo much generous pains to inſtruct, if they had been able, by the help of ſuch a language, to ſet their ſublime conceptions in a direct and full light, inſtead of that indirect and half light which comes reflected from images foreign to them.

I AM ready, therefore, on this account to lament that the attempt of biſhop WILKINS, to form ſuch a language, miſcarried, and that LEIBNITZ neither finiſhed his alphabet of human thoughts, nor his metaphyſical algebra. It may be ſaid perhaps, that theſe helps, great as they would be, would be ſuch only for the greateſt genii, and that we have, therefore, a vaſt obligation to theſe philoſophers, who make no longer the diſtinction that their predeceſſors made of initiated and profane, but deliver the myſteries of their ſcience in vulgar language, with condeſcenſion to our groſs conceptions, that would never comprehend them if they were kept in their native abſtraction, inſtead of being cloathed with ideas that fall under the view of imagination. Juſt ſo, it is ſaid, that the ſacred authors writ agreeably to all the vulgar notions of the ages and countries in which they lived, out of regard to their ignorance, and to the groſs conceptions of the people: as if theſe authors had not writ for all ages and all countries, or as if truth and error were to be followed like faſhions where

where they prevailed. This condeſcenſion, then, is very ill placed, and it would have become much better the great men we ſpeak of, to have raiſed their fellow creatures up, than to have let themſelves down; to have cured us of all our errors, than to have left us in any; and to have abſtracted us, or to have taught us plainly the great ſecret of abſtracting ourſelves in our mediations from all things ſenſible, than to have left us immerſed in them.

But to ſpeak more ſeriouſly and more plainly; the truth is, that if theſe admired maſters of reaſon did not hold the vulgar language, and make up their intellectual ſchemes of corporeal ideas, they would have nothing to ſay more than every man, who contemplates his own mind with attention, may know without their help. They are ſo far from being confined and clogged by the uſe of the idea they take from body and apply to mind, that it is by their means alone they extend their range and ſeem to riſe. Obſerve how father Malebranche ſets out in the very firſt ſection of his Reſearch of truth. He begins by conſidering perception and will. One of theſe is a paſſive, the other an active power of the mind. We know them intuitively, or the ideas we have of them by reflection are perfectly clear and diſtinct, ſo clear and diſtinct, that diſinitions and explanations of theſe, as of all our ſimple ideas, can only ſerve to perplex the mind and to render them obſcure. To what purpoſe then did this philoſopher deſcend into a long detail of compariſons between theſe two faculties of the mind, and two of the properties that belong to matter, that of receiving figures, and that of being determined to various motions? It was not neceſſary to explain What needed no explation, but it was neceſſary to lay, as he did lay with much ingenuity tho very precarioufly, ſome of the foundations of this ſyſtem.

This is the common practice of metaphyſical writers, and what Malebranche and our Berkeley have done ſo plauſibly, and ſo agreeably, that they, who are far from admitting the ſyſtems of either, read the writings of both with the utmoſt pleaſure the moſt heavy philoſopher, whoſe name ever ended in us, pretends to feel. Nor ſhall we be much ſurprized at their ſucceſs, if we conſider how the moſt extravagant poets, ſuch as Arioſto for example, who wander continually beyond the bounds of nature, and wherever a lawleſs fancy leads them, ſoften ſometimes the groſſeſt abſurdities under the maſk of figures. Struck by theſe, the mind grows attentive to them, ſtops it's attention there, and rather ſuppoſes an application than examines it.

When amuſement alone is concerned, and not inſtruction, this may be pardonable on both ſides, in the author and in the reader. But in more ſerious ſtudies, where one writes to inſtruct, and the other reads to be inſtructed, it is pardonable in neither. One rule, therefore, ought to be obſerved inviolably, the rule I mean of admitting, or rejecting figures as they are juſtified, or not juſtified by their application. Their applicationis their criterion. Metaphyſicians and divines, therefore, who have made figures and compariſons of ſo great conſequence by their uſe of them, ſhould conſider that the principal and moſt proper uſe of them, is like that of varniſh on a picture. As a painter would be thought mad who ſhould varniſh an unpainted canvaſs, ſo muſt they be expoſed to this cenſure, or to one more ſevere, if it appears at any time that they had no clear and determinate ideas in their minds, concerning intellectual ſubjects, and ſpiritual natures and operations, when they employed, under pretence of explaining them, ſo many others borrowed from the objects of ſenſe. When they have

really ſuch ideas in their minds, they muſt remember too that figures and compariſons are varniſh ſtill. It muſt not be uſed to alter the intellectual picture, it muſt only ſerve to give a greater luſtre, and to make it better ſeen. Intellectual ideas and notions, in the mind of the philoſopher or divine, ſhould lead them to the invention of figures, and theſe figures ſhould lead the ſcholar to theſe intellectual ideas and notions. When the latter is not ſo led, eaſily and almoſt unavoidably, the figures are improper, or he has a right to conclude that the philoſopher or divine had no ſuch ideas nor notions in his mind. Now the firſt of theſe proceedings is impertinent, and the ſecond is an arrant fraud. Figures in general, theſe of ſpeech, and all others that do not typify determinately, are unworthy of rational creatures, how much more of God? and figures that typify nothing, are nothing, or they are worſe than nothing; they are ſo many lies, ſince they pretend to denote ſomething real, when nothing real exiſts. How the ſight of that brazen ſerpent, which MOSES erected in the deſart, cured the ISRAELITES of the venomous bites of real ſerpents, I know not. Miraculouſly, ſay our divines. Juſt as other images work cures at this day, ſay your divines. Be this as it will, the figure typified very determinately what God intended it ſhould typify, when he ſaid, "pone eum pro ſigno." But when your divines and ours agree to make it a ſign of the Chriſt lifted up on the croſs, and crucified, he muſt be very cabaliſtical indeed who can diſcover the ſame determination. Real ſerpents had cauſed a real plague. A brazen ſerpent was the figure that ſignified this event to be over. It ſignified, therefore, at the ſame time, that the ſon of God himſelf was to come into the world near two thouſand years afterwards, to deliver mankind from the allegorical plague of ſin, which he did not moſt certainly cauſe. How reaſonable is one, how abſurd the other applica-

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tion of this figure? How neceſſary is it therefore to examine ſcrupulouſly the application of every figure, that we may not be impoſed on by falſe appearances? But I will conclude theſe Reflections by an example taken from figurative ſpeech. It will be thus more cloſe to my purpoſe, and that it may be the ſtronger to ſhew the abuſe of figures, it ſhall be taken from one that has a real, and be contraſted with one that has an imaginary application.

The word diſcourſe is derived from a Latin verb, which ſignifies to run about, and by the motion of our legs, and the agitation of our whole body (for when the word was invented all men believed they had bodies) to traverſe many different grounds, or the ſame ground many different ways. Now the application of this corporeal image to what paſſes in the mind, or to the action of the mind when we meditate on various ſubjects, or on many diſtinct parts of the ſame ſubject, and when we communicate theſe thoughts to one another, ſometimes with greater, and ſometimes with leſs agitation and rapidity, is obvious. It anſwers as nearly as ſuch applications can anſwer, and there is no danger that this figure ſhould communicate a falſe idea, or fail to produce that which it is deſigned to produce. There can be neither equivocation, perplexity, nor diſappointment in the uſe of it.

The word inſpiration is derived, like the other, from a Latin verb which ſignifies to blow in; and it has been ſaid, that "the image might be borrowed to denote an action of God "in an extraordinary manner, influencing, exciting, and en- "lightening the mind of a prophet, or apoſtle." How many aſſumptions are here in one ſhort ſentence? and how impoſſible muſt it be to come at any thing on which a reaſonable mind can reſt, whilſt figures are explained by other figures that want

want explanation as much? Influencing is a vague term, and may be applied ſeveral ways with equal propriety. But exciting and enlightening denote different kinds of action, and neither of them has any relation to inſpiration, or blowing in. Here then is metaphor heaped on metaphor, without any true application to an intellectual idea, and we know as little what is meant by inſpiration as we did before. I conceive inſpiration even leſs than abſtraction. The latter, ſuch as it is repreſented by moſt philoſophers, appears to me impoſſible; but I conceive what the ſuppoſed operation of the mind ſignified by this figurative term is, and by conceiving what is meant, or the application of the term, I conceive the apparent impoſſibility of the thing. But I have no more conception of this ſuppoſed action of the divine on the human mind, than I have of the ſpiration by which the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from the Father and the Son, according to the deciſion of the council of Florence that met to reconcile the Greek and Latin churches in the fifteenth century. The doctors of abſtraction, therefore, require that we ſhould believe againſt knowledge, and thoſe of inſpiration, that we ſhould be implicit without it. Now this would be a great deal too much, even if we did not know the uſe that has been made of the ſuppoſed natural power of abſtraction, and of the ſuppoſed ſupernatural gift of inſpiration. But both are ſufficiently known, and it is a little too late, and but a little, to impoſe either on us in the character of philoſophers. If we ſubmit to be implicit in another character, and in one of the caſes, as far as it is neceſſary to keep us even now within the pale of the Chriſtian Church, we ſhall do very prudently. But it will be true, however, that the term of inſpiration is a figure that gives us no intellectual idea, becauſe it is not really the image of any.

THERE was a time, and it laſted long, when this term was employed in a literal ſenſe. I refer to the time when Heatheniſh, Jewiſh, and Chriſtian ſuperſtition prevailed ſeparately firſt, and then unitedly. Ignorance and fear produced ſuperſtition, and ſuperſtition in it's turn maintained ignorance and fear in the minds of men. Thus ſuperſtition broached the notion of inſpiration, and when the notion was once eſtabliſhed, and the fact believed, ſuppoſed inſpiration ſerved to confirm and authorize ſuperſtition. That which has happened in ſo many other inſtances, happened in this, a groundleſs and abſurd opinion which grew into vogue in dark ages, and was conſecrated by a rude and ignorant people, prevailed in ages more enlightened. Men adopted what they would not have invented, and knowledge ſeemed to increaſe for no other reaſon, or to no other purpoſe, than to defend, to cultivate and to improve error.

INSPIRATION, which has been ſince aſcribed to a metaphyſical cauſe that metaphyſicians cannot explain, was eſteemed at firſt a phyſical operation that was obvious to the ſenſes. The goats of CORETAS approached a cavern on the hill of PARNASSUS. They fell into ſtrange agitations, and made an unuſual noiſe. The ſhepherd followed them, and as ſoon as he came near enough to receive the influence of the ſubterranean inſpiring blaſt, he began to be agitated like his goats, and to prophecy like them; for we may believe, as reaſonably as any part of the ſtory, that the only difference conſiſted in this, his language was underſtood, that of his goats was not. On this experience was the Temple built, and the famous oracle eſtabliſhed at DELPHI, "commune humani generis oraculum," as LIVY calls it. The PYTHIAN prieſteſs ſat on a tripod, leſt ſhe ſhould fall into the cavern when her head

began to turn, and from thence ſhe uttered with prophetic fury the inſpirations ſhe received, not from above, but from below. Many other examples might be brought of ſuch phyſical inſpirations, but this one is ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe; at leaſt it will be fully ſo when I have added, that they maintained their credit ſo well, and ſo long, even among philoſophers, that TULLY introduces his brother who was a zealous Stoician, as a perſon entirely convinced of their reality. So convinced he appears, that when an objection taken from the diſrepute into which this oracle began to fall, is oppoſed to the argument he had drawn from its univerſal reputation, QUINTUS thinks it ſufficient to anſwer on this phyſical principle, that the inſpiring virtue of the earth which uſed to excite and enlighten the mind of the Pythoneſs, might be worn out by age, as rivers have been ſeen to dry up, or to change their courſe *.

BUT this was not the ſole, tho it might be the firſt notion of a divine inſpiration. HESIOD, and your HOMER, and others more ancient than either, had filled the world with daemons and genii: and as poets were the philoſophers of thoſe ages among the Greeks, the machinery of poetry came ſoon to be that of philoſophy. PLATO, as great a poet as any of them in the garb of a philoſopher, multiplied vaſtly theſe imaginary beings, and aſſigned them different ranks and different employments. He made the ſyſtem of an intellectual world, and, in the reſpect I am going to mention, as abſurdly as many others, but more reverentially toward the ſupreme Being. He ſuppoſed a chain of intermediate beings from man up to God; and it is evident that theſe beings were in his ſyſtem the agents of the ſupreme being, both in the creation and government

* ——Poteſt vis illa terrae quae mentem PYTHIAE divino afflatu concitabat evanuiſſe vetuſtate, ut quoſdam evanuiſſe amnes aut in alium curſum contortos & deflexos videmus. De Divin. l. 1.

of the world. He did not raiſe up man to an immediate communication with God. The diſtance and the diſproportion ſeemed to him too great. He ſuppoſed him influenced, that is excited and reſtrained, enlightened and inſpired, as well as made, by other created beings, by whom this diſtance was nearly at leaſt filled up, and this diſproportion gradually leſſened. In his ſyſtem, therefore, a greater reverence was ſhewn to the ſupreme Being than in thoſe of ſome other theologians, in which God confers familiarly with men, and acts a part, not only in the moſt important, but in the moſt trifling ſcenes of our human farce. But ſtill the abſurdity remained of ſuch a gradation of beings. That there is a gradation, I doubt not, upwards, as our ſenſes inform us that there is one downwards. But ſuch a gradation, by which finite approaches nearer and nearer to infinite, is inconceivable. The diſtance and diſproportion will be ſtill infinite.

But to return, and to conclude what I ſhall ſay about the notions that obtained among the Heathens on this ſubject; for you know that I have reſerved to myſelf a right of following the matter as it riſes before me, without obſerving in theſe eſſays, any more than I uſed to do in our converſation, a juſt proportion in the members of my diſcourſe. The cauſes of inſpiration then were principally theſe, an intoxicating wind or vapor that blew into the inſpired perſons, or the action of daemons, or genii on their bodies, or in them. Such beings were believed univerſally to exiſt; for even Democritus, if I miſtake not, is ſaid to have admitted them. But they were believed to be material, tho ſpiritual and inviſible; and whether Plato thought them all good and beneficent or no, the general opinion, and that even of the latter Platonicians, held that ſome were good, and ſome bad, that there were pure and impure ſpirits. Their cotemporaries, the Chriſtian fathers,

fathers, affirmed that theſe ſpirits were all of the latter ſort. They attributed the whole ſecret of oracles rather to the malice of the devil, than to the knavery of the prieſts. I have read in BASNAGE *, I think, that ORIGIN and CHRYSOSTOM repreſented the prieſteſs ſitting on a tripod over the ſacred vent, with her legs wide open to receive the ſpirit, and that ſome pretended the oracles were delivered through this honorable channel. Nay, that judicious perſon, the martyr JUSTIN, ſcrupled not to aſſure the world, that theſe devils had carnal enjoyment of girls and boys too, in the very act of inſpiration. The general effect of inſpiration was madneſs and fury. Divine madneſs and divine fury they were called, and the perſons, thus inſpired, uttered their vaticinations in fits that made the body ſwell, and become diſtorted by convulſive motions. In this ſtate, and when they were quite out of their ſenſes, they were conſulted by men who thought themſelves in theirs, who were often the greateſt, and in public opinion the wiſeſt of mankind. TULLY † aſks on what authority we are to believe that the madman ſees what the wiſeman does not ſee, and that he who loſes human ſenſe acquires divine? His brother might have referred him for an anſwer to the works of his admired philoſopher, to that paſſage in the Phaedrus particularly where PLATO recommends, ſo highly, that divine fury which exerts itſelf in vaticination, myſtery, poetry and love, and where he gives the preference over all other wiſdom to that which divine fury infuſes.

Now nothing could reſemble more a heathen than a jewiſh vaticination, and no wonder is there, that it ſhould be ſo. Egypt and the eaſt were the great ſchools of ſuch philoſophy

* Antiq. Judaiques. † Quid vero habet auctoritatis furor iſte, quem divinum vocatis, ut quae ſapiens non videat, ea videat inſanus, et is, qui humanos ſenſus amiſerit, divinos affecutus ſit? De Div. l. 2.

phy and theology as I have mentioned. They abounded with ſeers of viſions and dreamers of dreams, with prophets and diviners, with wizards and cunning men, with theurgic as well as natural magic, and all the occult ſciences. The Greeks borrowed from hence almoſt all the knowledge, real and imaginary, that they had; and ſo did the Jews too, as ſome divines have had the candor to confeſs, whilſt the crowd of them affect to maintain the contrary againſt irreſiſtible probability, and would perſuade us that the whole heathen world was enlightened by the lamp of the tabernacle: as if any ſimilitude of opinions, cuſtoms, and rites, which is a good proof in general that the more modern learned of the more antient nation, was equally good to prove that the more antient learned of the more modern, the maſters of the ſlaves, and a people, that had an high opinion of themſelves, of a people whom they deſpiſed. But however this may have been, the Jews, according to the ſpirit of the moſaic ſyſtem, made the ſupreme Being more frequently an immediate actor in matters of inſpiration, as in all other matters, than the heathen did; tho they too employed the miniſtry of angels, whoſe names, at leaſt, they learned firſt from the Chaldaeans, if they did not come firſt acquainted with theſe ſpiritual beings among that people in their captivity.

This notion of an immediate action of God on the human mind became more common, and inſpiration more metaphyſical in the chriſtian ſchools. Some of the heathen philoſophers held opinions that led to this, and might have been improved, ſo as to derive all inſpiration immediately from the ſupreme Being in ſome extraordinary manner or other, which they would not have been at a loſs to repreſent, or rather to evade the neceſſity of repreſenting, by the help of figurative ſtile. Some of them aſſumed that the human ſoul

ſoul was drawn out of the divine nature, or was tinctured by it, or had catched it's fire from it. I know not how to expreſs better thoſe ſtrange words, ſtrange I mean in this application, hauſti and delibati. They aſſumed further, that the divine mind pervaded and filled all things; and when they aſſumed thus much, it ſeemed eaſy to conclude, from this near relation of the divine and human mind, to an action of the former on the latter, "cognatione divinorum animorum "animos humanos commoveri *."

PLATO's trinity, as little intelligible as it was, might have been another aſſumption by which to account more particularly for this divine act of inſpiration. The ſecond perſon, God's intelligence, the word, made men: and what could be more conſequential, than to aſcribe all particular inſpirations to the third perſon, that univerſal ſpirit, that energy of God, which animates and governs the whole? No part of this could have ſhocked the opinions of thoſe philoſophical theiſts, who acknowledged not only a general providence, but particular providences. As little could it have been thought repugnant to that principle which ſeemed common to them all, that principle of reverence to the one, the father of Gods and men, whom they conceived to be beyond and before all exiſtence. They could conceive no being, nor manner of being, equal to the Supreme; but neither did the platonic trinity ſuppoſe that there was any ſuch: and they might have placed the ſource of inſpiration, according to this theology, much higher than obvious, viſible cauſes, and even than the ſuggeſtions of daemons and genii, without aſcribing it to the firſt mind, or admitting any mind equal to the firſt. They had the more reaſon to do this, and to place inſpiration, as it were, out of ſight, when the credit of oracles began

* TULLY de Div.

began to fail, and a groſs phyſical account of it would paſs no longer.

But that which heathen theologers could do, chriſtian theologers could not, after the Nicaean council at leaſt, whatever they did or might have done before it. They aſcribed inſpiration, indeed, to the Holy Ghoſt; but the three perſons of this trinity making one God only, they aſcribed inſpiration to an immediate act of the ſupreme Being, as the Jews had done before them, among whom this act, and the immediate preſence of the Deity were ſaid to be manifeſted often in a ſenſible manner. Something of this kind obtained at firſt among the chriſtians. Voices from heaven for inſtance, and the viſible deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, would have made inſpiration, if theſe phaenomena had continued, as much an object of ſenſe in the chriſtian ſyſtem, as it had been ever in that of the Jews or of the heathen. But theſe phaenomena did not continue, and tho ſigns and wonders were ſaid to be wrought by perſons inſpired, inſpiration became inviſible, and the notion of it purely metaphyſical; leſs abſurd than former notions perhaps, but more remote too from human comprehenſion.

The conſequence of all this was, that the proof of inſpiration reſting on authority and opinion, it became very equivocal. Every ſect and every council pretended to it; and, whilſt they oppoſed and damned one another, what one ſide attributed to inſpirations of the Holy Ghoſt, the other attributed to ſuggeſtions of the devil; for in this ſyſtem the Holy Ghoſt, that is God himſelf, is the inſpirer and comforter, and the devil, an inferior, a created ſpirit, and yet a rival to the Father of all ſpirits, is the tempter and tormentor. How God acts on the human mind to inſpire and comfort,

and the devil to tempt, was then, and is ſtill a metaphyſical or theological ſecret. But the power of tormenting, which the devil exerciſed in thoſe days, was no ſecret at all. Legions of impure ſpirits were believed to take often poſſeſſion of the bodies of men, from whence nothing could drive them but aſperſions of holy water, and other forms of eccleſiaſtical conjuration, performed by prieſts, that is, by men on whom the impoſition of hands had conferred the Holy Ghoſt in a conſtant ſucceſſion from the apoſtles. This conjuration had been firſt taught by SOLOMON, as JOSEPHUS aſſerts in the eighth book of his antiquities, and it continued long in credit, for much the ſame reaſons that oracles and the arts of divination had done ſo formerly. It is kept in ſome uſe ſtill by the roman clergy, and our reformed clergy would not be ſorry perhaps to revive this pious practice.

WHILST ignorance and ſuperſtition reigned triumphantly, and the fantaſtical ideas and notions which they communicate, and which authority, education, and habit do in ſome ſort realize in the mind, ſpread and prevailed; men might be eaſily perſuaded that the ſpirit, or breath of God, which blew into the face of the firſt man, and made him a living creature *, might blow likewiſe on extraordinary occaſions, and in an extraordinary manner, into the faces of ſome of his poſterity, as into choſen veſſels. They might be eaſily perſuaded, that this breath was not only a principle of life to all, but an influencing, exciting, and enlightening principle to ſome. They might imagine without any great effort, that the effect of this occaſional breath was to fan into a flame the latent ſparks of a certain fire that had been kindled in the original con-

* Inſpiravit in faciem ejus ſpiraculum vitae, et factus eſt homo in animam viventem, are the words of MOSES.

conſtitution of man, and had been extinguiſhed by the fall. They might imagine, that they knew really what all this meant, and on ſuch reaſonings, which would have been none of the worſt they employed, they might have proved to themſelves and others the inſpiration of chriſtian ſaints, to whom ſublime myſterious truths were revealed, and of jewiſh prophets and ſeers, who foretold future events and recovered ſtolen goods; for even this, as low as it may ſeem, was a part of their employment, and one effect of their inſpiration.

But this reign is well nigh over; or, if it continues in ſome of theſe parts of the world, it triumphs univerſally in none. He who pretends to inſtruct now muſt know firſt, and expect, if he uſes any figure, to be called upon to explain his meaning; that is, to ſhew this meaning without the veil of any figure. Inſpiration was long underſtood in the literal ſenſe of the word, not only whilſt men imagined groſsly that it was the effect of a ſubterranean wind or vapor, but when they had ſpiritualized it a little, and fancied it a breath that came from above, or a ſpirit that deſcended on one prophet, and paſſed from one to another with ſenſible effects. Since it could be received no longer in the literal ſenſe, philoſophers and divines have given up the literal ſenſe, and kept the word that ſignified ſomething, to ſerve as a figure that ſignifies nothing, and that can be tranſlated into nothing but ſome other figure. Figures and types are indeed the ſtrongeſt entrenchments of metaphyſics and theology: and it is in them that the profeſſors of theſe reputed ſciences defend themſelves the beſt.

An hiſtory of inſpiration, like one of divination, would be a collection of ſuch extravagancies and abſurdities, as might be ſufficient to make our ſpecies forfeit the character of reaſonable creatures, if it did not ſhew at the ſame time that

that by a free uſe of their reaſon men have detected, one after another, moſt of the fallacies, the groſſeſt at leaſt, that had been impoſed on them by Heathens, Jews, and Chriſtians, for even of theſe it cannot be denied. The fautors of inſpiration are thus reduced to their laſt entrenchment; and having abandoned all their other poſts as untenable, they endeavor to defend this by not explaining what has been refuted as often as any explanation of it has been attempted. Your friend, ATTERBURY, who knew more of claſſical learning, and even of divinity, than he did of politics, tho he affected theſe the moſt, has ſometimes lamented that any explanations of the real preſence in the euchariſty had been given, and that the church had made any deciſions about it. As long as it was held an inexplicable myſtery, it was believed, he ſaid; but as ſoon as divines had been ſo unſkilful as to attempt to explain it, BERENGER's recantation ſignified nothing, and it has been a diſputed point ever ſince. If this be a right notion, as I incline to think it is, theſe two myſteries, that of the real preſence, and that of inſpiration, have had very different fates. The firſt ſet out a myſtery, and was piouſly believed, till attempts to explain it ſhewed that it implied contradiction. The other ſet out as a natural phaenomenon, and was ſo far from being thought a real myſtery, how much ſoever it might remain ſuch to the vulgar, that prophecy and divination, the effects of it, were thought attainable by purifications, purgations, and other phyſical methods, and that they became arts which were taught in the ſchools by the Heathens and the colleges of the Jews. But the notion of inſpiration has ended in myſtery where the other began: and this expedient, the only one that can ſupport it at all, would ſupport it effectually, if theſe ages reſembled a little better thoſe wherein the belief of the real preſence was firſt eſtabliſhed.

It may be ſaid, that an extraordinary action of God in the human mind, which the word inſpiration is now uſed to denote, is not more inconceivable than the ordinary action of mind on body, and of body on mind; and I confeſs that it is not. But yet the caſes are ſo widely different, that no argument can be drawn from one in favor of the other. It is impoſſible to doubt of an action which is an object of intuitive knowledge, and whereof we are conſcious every moment; and it is impertinent to deny the exiſtence of any phaenomenon merely becauſe we cannot account for it. But then this phaenomenon muſt be apparent, and the proof that it exiſts, or has exiſted, muſt be ſuch as no reaſonable man can refuſe to admit. Otherwiſe we ſhall be expoſed to make frequently the ridiculous figure that philoſophers have ſometimes made, when it has been diſcovered, after they had reaſoned long about a thing, that there was no ſuch thing. We muſt not aſſume for truth, what can be proved neither à priori, nor à poſteriori. A myſtery cannot be proved à priori, it would be no myſtery if it could: and inſpiration is become a myſtery, ſince all we know of it is, that it is an inexplicable action of the divine on the human mind. It would be ſilly, therefore, to aſſume it to be true, becauſe God can act myſteriouſly, that is, in ways unknown to us, on his creature man; for juſt ſo Asgyll did prove, or might have proved, that men do not die, but are tranſlated, becauſe God can tranſlate them. There is then no poſſibility of proving inſpiration à priori; and the proofs that are brought à poſteriori, for Chriſtian inſpiration, are not more deciſive to Chriſtians, than thoſe which the Stoicians brought in favour of vaticination and divination were to them, nor than thoſe which the Mahometans and the worſhippers of Foe bring of the ſame kind are to them.

This

This word inſpiration, about which I have ſaid ſo much more than I intended, belongs properly to you ſons of Apollo; and to you it ſhould be of right reſtored. Whilſt you were at once poets, prophets, philoſophers, and divines, and went about from houſe to houſe ſinging, as the Methodiſts do preaching ſublime doctrines, the uſe of it might be a little confuſed: and what you aſſumed in the two firſt characters, you might aſcribe to yourſelves and others in the two laſt. But ſince they are become diſtinct profeſſions, as well as characters, and one of them, that of prophets, is extinct, inſpiration may have it's place and uſe in poetry; but no where elſe. If philoſophers and divines employ this word, which ſignifies a particular and determinate action, as a figure to ſignify ſome other action, they employ it improperly. It cannot ſerve to inform; but it may ſerve, and it actually does ſerve, to deceive. Our Quakers, our Methodiſts, and Enthuſiaſts of every ſort and in every religion, are confirmed, by the received uſe of this word, in the belief that the ſpirit of God deſcends upon them, is inſpired into them, excites and enlightens their minds, and enables them by it's powerful operation to utter all the extravagancies, which are in their opinion ſo many divine truths.

It is the more reaſonable to guard againſt every thing of this kind; becauſe the hypotheſis of ſome of our fineſt modern writers on the ſubject of the human mind, tho they do not pretend directly to be inſpired, ſeem to renew and improve the reveries, or waking dreams of ancient philoſophers, in ſuch a manner as to lay again the foundations of ſuperſtition, by ſuppoſing an immediate and conſtant communication between the divine and the human natures. That Malebranche ſuppoſed ſuch a communication, is evident in all his writings: and his Chriſtian and metaphyſical meditations are nothing

leſs

leſs than a dialogue between the word and him. The conference was not held indeed in the terms and form of the dialogue; but the language he makes the word to hold in it, he affirms to be conformable to the anſwers which he thinks he received when he interrogated the word on the ſame ſubjects.

I HAVE ſometimes wondered that divines and metaphyſicians, who have borrowed ſo many fantaſtical notions from PLATO, have neglected one which they might have found in the apology of SOCRATES, and by which they might have accounted more probably, and more decently than they have done, for divine inſpirations, revelations, and communications. They might have learned there to diſtinguiſh between the aethereal and elementary body. We may compare the firſt to a ſhirt, ſince the ſame PLATO compares the ſecond in the phaedro to a ſuit of cloaths, and ſince it is worn under the other, "ſub "manifeſto hoc corpore latens." Now it was by this medium that SOCRATES was inſpired by his daemon, or guardian angel. He ſaw viſions, and he heard voices, but how? Not by his elementary, but by his aethereal ſenſes. Thus an inferior ſpirit, and not the ſupreme Being, is the immediate actor; and inſpiration is no longer an unmeaning figure of ſpeech. But this is not enough for metaphyſical divines. Our notions of humanity muſt be raiſed higher, even at the expence of debaſing (for as ſuch it appears to me) our notions of the divinity. God and man muſt be more intimately joined, tho by endeavoring ſo to join them, they renew, in ſome ſort, the groſſeſt abſurdities of paganiſm.

MANY inſtances might be produced of this ſort, and ſome very flagrant. I will content myſelf in this place with the mention of one. BAYLE obſerves, that the notion of ſeeing

all things in the infinite Being, which father MALEBRANCHE advanced on this aſſumption, that our ideas muſt be in God, becauſe they cannot be modifications of any created mind, differs little from the doctrine of DEMOCRITUS *, who taught, that the images of objects, which preſent themſelves to our ſenſes, are emanations of God, nay that they are God, and that the idea in our minds is God likewiſe. The obſervation is certainly juſt, and I need not enlarge upon it to ſhew you that it is ſo. Inſtead of that, I will aſk you whether the different hypotheſis of a philoſopher, whom you and I love and honor, has not ſome, tho a more remote reſemblance to the ſame doctrine? Both of them at leaſt have, in my opinion, one common tendency, that which I have juſt now mentioned. If I was perfectly perſuaded, as I am very much of the contrary, that we perceive all our ideas in the divine mind, I could account for all that is attributed to inſpiration by a figure, that would have a ſort of metaphyſical meaning. I could repreſent the ſoul as a mirror, and it has been ſo repreſented, I think, by ſome, and then ſuppoſe, that images received from the preſence of God to it, are reflected by it, which would be like the reflected light of the ſun, a ſecondary and fainter, but a divine illumination. Again, could I comprehend that viſual language in which "the author of na-"ture conſtantly ſpeaks to the eyes of all mankind;" I might be able perhaps to comprehend how God may ſpeak to prophets and apoſtles in viſions, or elſe I might deduce by analogy,

* The words of TULLY are theſe, "DEMOCRITUS, qui tum imagines earumque "circuitus in deorum numero refert: tum illam naturam quae imagines fundit ac "mittat: tum ſcientiam intelligentiamque." They will be better tranſlated thus. DEMOCRITUS who places among the gods not only the images of the objects that ſurround and ſtrike us, but that nature which pours forth and ſends theſe images to us and knowledge and intelligence. COTTA mentions the ſame notions afterwards, not in the ſame words as VELLEIUS, but to the ſame effect. TULLY de Nat Deor. l. 1.

logy, that as we think we ſee when we do not really ſee, but only receive ideas through the eye from an immediate action of God, ſo prophets and apoſtles might think that they employed the faculties of their own excited and illuminated minds, and ſignified their own thoughts by the words they pronounced, when they neither thought nor ſpoke, but when the breath of God articulated in their organs. I might be able to comprehend ſuch ſublime notions, and I ſhould be glad, no doubt, to find how happily theſe doctrines coincide with that antient opinion, that prophets prophecied often without knowing that they did ſo. But, I confeſs, that I comprehend as little our friend's hypotheſis as I do that of the father of the oratory; tho I comprehend very clearly how we may be ſaid in ſome ſort, and in ſome particular caſes, to learn to ſee; that is by the ordinary courſe of experience, and not by any divine agency.

SHALL I own it? I cannot be mortified at my want of comprehenſion in this caſe. When philoſophers employ clear and determinate ideas, ſuch as are real not fantaſtic, and when they reaſon on principles that are evidently true, inſtead of ſuch as are doubtful at beſt, I comprehend them without any extreme labor of mind. When they do otherwiſe, I miſpend no time in making unprofitable efforts to comprehend them. COTTA treats the notions of DEMOCRITUS that have been mentioned with the utmoſt contempt, and even VELLEIUS had entered into no refutation of them. BAYLE thinks a little genius could never form them, and that in order to form them, a man muſt comprehend the whole extent of power, which belongs to a nature capable of painting in our minds the images of objects. I will imitate in all ſimilar caſes the old academician, not the modern ſceptic,

who ſeems a dogmatiſt on this occaſion. I will follow no man out of the high road of plain common ſenſe. In that, the philoſopher may lead me to all real knowledge; for common ſenſe does not exclude uncommon diſcoveries in the ſearch of truth. But the philoſopher goes often out of this road, whilſt the illiterate, unthinking crowd of mankind cannot go far in it. Theſe are the two extremes in which men ſometimes meet. The difference conſiſts always in their acquiſitions and habits, and not always in their natural faculties. The reaſon of one is not cultivated like that of the other; but the imaginations of both may be apt to warm and tranſport them alike. Whilſt the philoſopher conſults his reaſon alone, he will be always far before the other. But if his imagination carries him away, there is a chance that they may meet, and the philoſopher with all his knowledge, and all his reaſon, may have not his own whimſies alone, but thoſe of the moſt vulgar underſtandings to ſupport.

SECT. VI.

HAVING dwelt thus long on one art of the mind that degenerates into artifice, it is time I ſhould proceed to another; and the art to be conſidered next, is that which was intended when I ſaid, that we are ſometimes obliged to pay in counters for want of ready money. What I mean by it is this. We are ſometimes obliged in philoſophical, as well as in common diſcourſe, to make uſe of words that have no determinate, nor indeed, properly, any ideas or notions at all annexed to them. I ſay, we are obliged to do ſo, in order to diſtinguiſh this caſe from that of metaphyſics and theology, which are almoſt wholly converſant, when they keep within their own bounds and go neither into phyſics nor ethics, about

words that have no intelligible meaning, words that have been invented to conceal ignorance, and to create an appearance of ſcience: whereas the words intended here, tho they have no ideas nor notions, properly ſpeaking, annexed to them, have however a meaning and an uſe, an intelligible meaning and a good uſe. Two of them I will produce as examples, and they ſhall be words that ſerve to denote unknown cauſes of known effects. They take their preciſion, like the names of ſubſtances, from ſenſible effects, and they refer either to an unknown real cauſe, or to the unknown principle of ſome apparent cauſe.

Our ignorance of cauſes, our curioſity, and the extravagant opinions of philoſophers about them, are equally great. I ſhall not enter on that ſubject here at leaſt. Something however muſt be ſaid about the notion of cauſe, in order to ſhew the reaſon, and even neceſſity of employing ſuch words as I have mentioned, and to introduce what I propoſe to ſay concerning the uſe and abuſe of them. Neglecting, therefore, all the abſtract notions that are entertained about cauſe, the nice and trifling diſtinctions between the cauſe and the ſufficient reaſon of any thing, and the other diſtinctions, as well as diviſions, and ſubdiviſions that have been made, and that ſerve, for the moſt part, to no other purpoſe than to perplex us in a labyrinth of words, let us content ourſelves to underſtand when we ſpeak of cauſe in general, "That, by the im-"mediate, or remote, the phyſical, or moral virtue whereof "any thing is what it is, or any thing is done as it is done."

The ſupreme Being is the firſt, and, ſtrictly, the ſole efficient cauſe. But as we know nothing of his manner of being, ſo we know nothing of his manner of cauſing. In your Homer's machinery the gods are perpetually actors, but the poet

poet neither employs them ſo much, nor more impoperly, nor more unworthily than philoſophers and divines have preſumed to employ the Deity. Let us think with greater reverence of God, and whilſt we acknowledge him to be the firſt, let us not imagine him to be the immediate cauſe of every phenomenon and every thing that happens. Through how many mediums, if I may ſay ſo, may not the rays of divine efficacy paſs before they arrive at us! Far be it from me to neglect or to diſcourage the contemplation of the firſt efficient cauſe who ſhines ſo glorioufly in all his works. But let us adore him in the contemplation of his works, and of the order of ſecond cauſes by which the ſyſtem of them is maintained, and carried on. Second cauſes cannot be reckoned in a ſtrict philoſophical ſenſe efficient, when they are conſidered relatively to the whole extent of being, at the head of which is God. But as they have a communicated efficiency in ſuch degrees, of ſuch kinds, and under ſuch directions as it is communicated to them by infinite wiſdom and power, they appear efficient when they are conſidered relatively to us, and to our ſyſtem: and ſince all our knowledge is in truth relative to theſe, we may be well content to admit ideas that are ſo too, and that reach no further. Theſe are our limits, and where our experimental knowledge of ſecond cauſes ſtops, there our phyſical enquiries ſhould ſtop. All beyond is metaphyſical jargon; for at what point ſoever we leave phyſics for metaphyſics, we fall of courſe into jargon. The antients generally ſet out in it. The moderns too often conclude in it.

The firſt example I ſhall produce of words that ſerve to denote unknown cauſes of known effects, ſhall be the word chance. Every event that happens in the courſe of human affairs, how contingent ſoever it may ſeem, has a real and peculiar cauſe. But when theſe cauſes are too remote, or too complicated, to be eaſily or at all diſcerned by us, we call the event

contingent, and the cauſe chance. Thus we endeavor to ſupply our want of ideas, to think with leſs confuſion, to diſcourſe more intelligibly, and to make up the ſum with counters which we cannot make up with money. But in this kind of payment there has been much abuſe, and much deceit. Superſtition attempted to make theſe counters paſs for real money; and, inſtead of keeping the word chance to ſignify in it's application nothing more than this, that the cauſe of an event was unkown, to make it paſs for an actual cauſe and a poſitive Being. Superſtition imperſonated it under the name of fortune: and this chimerical divinity was ſuppoſed to direct arbitrarily all the events whoſe cauſes were not apparent, or which exceeded in good or ill the expectations of men. The heathens accounted by it for paſt events, conſulted it about future, and referred themſelves to it in doubtful caſes.

It is ſtrange that ſuch ſuperſtitions, inſtead of being confined to the heathen world, ſhould have been as prevalent among God's choſen people, both Jews and Chriſtians, and ſhould be ſcarce exploded at this hour. It is ſtranger ſtill that a recourſe to the deciſion of chance ſhould be expreſsly commanded in the Old Teſtament, and occaſionlly countenanced in the New, even on ſo important an occaſion as the election of an apoſtle in the place of Judas Iscariot. Yet ſo it is, and from hence we may believe it happened that ſome even of the moſt puerile and abſurd appeals to chance, if one can be more ſo than another, were long preſerved among chriſtians, and by them applied moſt profanely and cruelly. Many different ſortes or chances were conſulted by the heathen. Thoſe of Praeneſte, where Fortune had a temple adorned with moſaic work by Sylla, who truſted much to the goddeſs, and took the name of Foelix, on account of his ſucceſs which he aſcribed to her, were extremely famous. I do not remember how theſe conſultations

ſultations were made ; but thoſe that had the names of Sortes Homericae, and Sortes Virgilianae, were made by dipping at random on ſome paſſage in the poems of HOMER and VIRGIL, and the ſuperſtition was ſure to be confirmed whenever, as it could not but happen often, future events ſeemed in any degree to have been figured in theſe paſſages. An odd inſtance of this which is preſerved in a tradition derived, I think, from Mr. COWLEY, I may mention as I go along. This poet and ſome other perſons, attached to CHARLES the firſt, were with him in the iſle of WIGHT, where CROMWELL kept him in priſon till he brought him to the block. Their amuſement, for it could be nothing more, was to try the Sortes Virgilianae ; and in trying them it is reported, that the unfortunate prince dipped on thoſe terrible imprecations that DIDO makes againſt AENEAS and his poſterity, in the fourth book of the Aeneid.

I SAID that theſe ſuperſtitious uſages have been applied profanely and cruelly, by Chriſtians : and I was in the right to ſay ſo. What could be more profane than the practice of opening the ſacred books, in order to take from the firſt paſſage that occurred a prognoſtic of events, and to degrade them to the ſame ſilly uſe that the Heathens made of their poems ? What could be more cruel than the cuſtom of deciding cauſes criminal and civil too, by duels, which was introduced by the barbarous northern nations ; and was, notwithſtanding the declarations of ſome popes againſt it, ſo far approved by the church, that it was followed on many occaſions in eccleſiaſtical controverſies, and that it was accompanied on all occaſions with much eccleſiaſtical ceremony, even ſo far that a prieſt bleſſed in the field the weapons of the champions ? This trial, like that of paſſing blindfold over red-hot plough-ſhares, and others, were appeals to chance as to a judge : and both theſe appeals, and the conſultations of chance about future events,

were

were founded on a theological axiom invented to excuſe them on one hand, and to create more reverence for them on the other, that God preſides over chance, and directs it by interpoſitions of his providence; ſo that to interrogate chance was to interrogate God, and the deciſions of chance were the deciſions of God.

To apply the word chance in this manner, was abſurd enough. But what ſhall we ſay of thoſe philoſophers who aſcribed the creation of the world to chance. Superſtition perverted this innocent art of the mind: and a word, that ſignified no determinate cauſe at all, was made to ſignify a ſuperior Being who governs the affairs of the world, and to whoſe agency thoſe events were to be aſcribed that could not be accounted for otherwiſe. Philoſophy, the philoſophy of men who affected to put ſuperſtition under their feet, and to account by phyſical reſearches for all the phaenomena, attributed the original of all things to chance. By this proceeding the Epicureans did not endeavour to ſcreen their ignorance, but they pretended to ſhew their knowledge of cauſes. They erected chance into a firſt phyſical cauſe, and derived the production of the univerſe from it. They aſſumed a chaos of innumerable heterogeneous particles, endowed with eſſential activity, and with whatever elſe was neceſſary for their purpoſe, like the declination of theſe atoms; after which they concluded that ſuch a number of entities in perpetual motion and action one on another, muſt paſs ſooner or later through all poſſible combinations. From hence they concluded again, that the formation of the world was cauſed by a certain concourſe, or combination of atoms, without the unneceſſary help of a directing mind; and that this concourſe being fortuitous, the world was made by chance. But enough has

has been ſaid of the uſe and abuſe of this word. It is time to ſpeak of thoſe that have been made of the word force.

SINCE even ALCIPHRON the minute philoſopher could frame no preciſe idea of force, though he "ſhut his eyes to aſſiſt "his meditation," it might well be aſked how it comes to paſs, that there are ſo many refined ſubtilties and nice diſtinctions about this ſame force? Ingenious and learned men might have employed their time much better moſt certainly, than they have done about "ſubtil abſtracts, ſpiritual quinteſſences, "un certo che and un non ſo che." I am ſorry to have this proof the more of the folly and affectation of philoſophers. But I am not at all at a loſs to account for them, nor to ſhew from whence the difference ariſes between theſe viſionaries, and thoſe great men who have diſcourſed rationally about force. The difference ariſes plainly from hence. The former have abuſed this art of the mind, and ſuppoſed, or reaſoned as if they ſuppoſed, that this word ſignified what common ſenſe never meaned to ſignify by it. The others have not turned art into artifice in this manner, but have reaſoned about force as about the unknown cauſe of ſenſible effects, or the unknown cauſality of apparent cauſes. It may ſeem ſtrange perhaps to our firſt thoughts, that men ſhould talk ſenſe, for it will never ſeem ſtrange that they ſhould talk nonſenſe, about ſomething whereof they have no ideas. But the reaſon why they do ſo in the inſtance before us, will appear to our ſecond thoughts extremely plain. That it may appear ſo the more, and that we may ſhew the better how induſtrious the mind is to help it's natural infirmities by art in the conceptions and expreſſions of things, let me add a few reflections to what has been already obſerved.

WITH-

WITHOUT meaning what thoſe philoſophers meaned who ſcreened ſo much ignorance behind the notions they endeavored to eſtabliſh of occult qualities and occult cauſes, we may ſay that the cauſality of apparent cauſes, and therefore the firſt efficient cauſes in the order of ſecond cauſes will be always occult, whatever hypotheſis or ſyſtem we follow. The peripatetics and ſchoolmen imagined the qualities of ſubſtances, as they were and are ſtill called, and which are ſuppoſed to excite ideas immediately by their immediate action on our organs, and mediately by their action on other bodies, to be real entities derived from ſubſtantial forms, inherent in ſubſtances ſome how or other; but diſtinct from them, and added to them. Modern philoſophers, more intelligibly and more conformably to experience, have baniſhed all theſe notions of qualities diſtinct from body, and have taught us that the action of body on body is produced excluſively of them by the inward conſtitution of body itſelf, and is varied according to the divers conſtitutions of the bodies that are at any time paſſive, and the different ſtates they are in. This opinion leads us on to obſerve the mechaniſm of body, the laws of motion, and whatever elſe makes any part of phyſical enquiry. The other is founded in abſtract general notions, which the knowledge of particulars had little ſhare in framing, and points up to the chimeras of imagination. But ſtill, even the beſt of them ſtops ſhort of the real eſſences of ſubſtances, ſhews us more cauſes, but ſhews us as little the principles of their cauſality.

ALTHO the ſyſtem of philoſophy be in this reſpect totally changed, yet the mind has found it convenient to preſerve the notion of ſenſible qualities. They were thought real, and referred to ſubſtances as inherent ſpecifically in them.

They are conceived now to be qualities by imputation only, and refer to the manner in which our ſenſes are affected. We cannot ſay with ſtrict propriety, this clock has ſeveral ſenſible qualities, though it marks the days of the month to our ſight alone, and the hours and the minutes to our eyes and to our ears. We know that there are no ſuch diſtinct qualities in the clock, and that all theſe effects are produced by one ſpring, governed and producing effects according to it's own temper, according to laws and directions reſulting from the ſtructure of the whole machine, and according to the texture and ſtate of the organs of thoſe to whom it is viſible, or audible. Juſt ſo we cannot ſay with ſtrict propriety, that ſnow is cold by a cold quality, any more than white by a white quality; or that fire is hot by a hot quality. They excite ideas that we diſtinguiſh and mark by theſe words; but they contain nothing in them that reſembles theſe ideas. By the perceptions we have of theſe ideas, we mark, under the name of qualities, the divers effects of the unknown eſſences of ſubſtances.

This modern expedient (for the mind invents expedients as faſt as it finds the want of them in the improvement, or more eaſy improvement of knowledge) is the more reaſonably employed on another account. Though there are no ſuch diſtinct ſpecific qualities in bodies as were aſſumed by philoſophers, yet the particles which compoſe bodies are often heterogeneous, as they appear by ſure experiments; among other inſtances in that of light, and in the production of colors. Now this heterogeneity, which is thought to conſiſt in the different ſizes of the particles and which may conſiſt in other differences undiſcoverable by us, continuing the ſame, and each kind acting and being acted upon according to it's kind, this amounts in ſome manner to a notion of qualities contained in bodies; and being ſo conceived, the mind knows no more in-

deed of the real conſtitutions of bodies than it knew before, but proceeds in this hypothetical manner a little better and with greater clearneſs and preciſion in the purſuit of phyſical enquiries. Theſe enquiries thus aſſiſted enable us to analyze the component particles of bodies in their effects, and to diſcover in them too ſome general laws by which the action of theſe component particles ſeparately and collectively is directed. This is ſome knowledge, and has the appearance of being greater than it is. But there is ſomething ſtill behind, concerning which we cannot boaſt even the leaſt appearance of knowledge. Body acts on body by contact and pulſion. This is certain, though it be not ſo certain that body can act no other way, as philoſophers generally aſſume. But even this pulſion is cauſed by motion, as motion is cauſed by pulſion: ſo that we get thus into a circle, and may go eternally round in the dark, without being nearer to diſcover what it is that puts mobility, that eſſential property of matter or body, into action, unleſs we ſuppoſe that the motion impreſſed originally continues ſtill without any diminution. Who can doubt that there is attraction or gravitation and repulſion in body, as well as pulſion? Who can withold his admiration from thoſe diſcoveries that modern philoſophy has made concerning the laws of motion, the properties of bodies that become apparent by them, and the actions of bodies on bodies that follow according to them? But who can or will ever be able to ſay what the ſprings of corporeal nature are, without which there could be neither action nor motion? What is that ſpring, for inſtance, which emits from the body of the ſun innumerable particles of light, that make their paſſage of fifty millions of miles to our earth in ſeven minutes of time, or thereabouts, with a velocity inconceivable though demonſtrated? Well may the cauſe be incomprehenſible, when the effect paſſes comprehenſion.

Here now the word force, of which we are to ſpeak, comes into play, and ſerves as a ſign of the unknown cauſes of the phaenomena, both of nature and of art; for effects are produced in the works of art by an imitation of thoſe of nature, whereof the cauſes are unknown even to the artificer. When we employ the word alone, it is of very vague ſignification, and imports nothing more than ſome determining power intellectual or corporeal. But the mind takes two methods to give it greater preciſion, when that is neceſſary. We annex it ſometimes to words which ſignify that whereof we would, on ſuch occaſions, denote the power in general to produce effects in phyſics, in mechanics, in ethics; and thus we ſay the force of wind, the force of a mill, or the force of habit. We annex at other times to it words that, referring to particular known effects, ſerve to fix on every occaſion the meaning of it; juſt as we annex the words hot or cold, to ſignify certain ſuppoſed qualities of body, and as intelligibly at leaſt as we uſe the names of ſubſtances. Thus we ſpeak of attractive, repelling, impelling force, of the force of gravitation, of coheſion, and even of inactivity. Our Newton, who has opened, by the help of theſe ſure guides experiment and geometry, ſo large a field of knowledge and enquiry to preſent and future philoſophers concerning the greateſt and the leaſt phaenomena of nature, was far from pretending to determine the efficient cauſe of his attraction, or what that force is which makes bodies, and every particle of body, mutually tend to one another, and thereby give us an idea of attracting according to what has been taken notice of already. He diſtinguiſhed ſo carefully between the particular attractions of the ſchools, and his meaning in the uſe of this word, that nothing could be more deſpicable than the ignorance or malice of thoſe who would have confounded them, and have made him an aſſerter

of occult qualities, who diſcovered the moſt univerſal and the leaſt occult quality, if I may have leave to call it ſo for once, that ever was, ſince it intercedes the whole corporeal ſyſtem. To this, and to the ſeveral kinds of it, he referred all the phaenomena that cannot be accounted for by impulſe, and they are many, though many of thoſe which were aſcribed to a ſort of attraction by the antients are on better foundations aſcribed to impulſe by the moderns. But neither for the cauſe of impulſe, nor of attraction, nor of any action of body even the moſt ſenſible, can philoſophy account. They, therefore, who uſe the word force as the ſign of an unknown cauſe, whilſt they apply themſelves ſolely to diſcover the laws by which this cauſe acts, and the effects it produces, make a proper uſe of the word. They who affect to talk in any other manner, either phyſical or metaphyſical, about force, abuſe the word moſt impertinently, and pervert into artifice a very uſeful art of the mind.

But this is not the only method by which this art of the mind is perverted. It degenerates into artifice likewiſe, by the uſe which they make of it, who invent words to point out cauſes, they ſuppoſe unknown, of effects whoſe real cauſes are known. In the former method men are led into error, by affecting knowledge; in this, by affecting ignorance. Whatever force is, it is the cauſe of effects that are known, but cannot be aſcribed to any cauſe that is known. In this the propriety of the word conſiſts; for if they could be aſcribed to any cauſe known and denominated, it would be improper, and the uſe of it could only ſerve to miſlead. But there may be more than error, there may be fraud in this caſe; for, to borrow an image from the application of the word chance, the fair gameſter who ſhould ſee a raffle of ſixes thrown ſeveral times together might aſcribe it to chance, that is, to an unknown

known cauſe, very properly ; but the ſharper, who had loaded the dice, or who knew that they were loaded, would aſcribe it to chance fraudulently as well as improperly.

I COULD wiſh that ALCIPHRON and LYSICLES had made this obſervation to EUPHRANOR, and had applied it to ſhew him why they admitted the word force, and rejected the word grace. The taſk would not have been hard, ſince it would not have been hard to ſhew him real cauſes ſufficiently known, and ſufficiently marked by words, of the effects aſcribed by him to a cauſe ſuppoſed unknown, and marked by a diſtinct word appropriated to this purpoſe. They might have ſhewn theſe cauſes to be the influence of a religious education, a warm head, and a warmer heart ; hope, fear, grief, joy, ſtrong paſſions turned by prejudice and habit to devotion, devotion itſelf nurſing it's own principles, the effect in it's turn becoming a cauſe uniform and conſtant, or redoubling it's force on the leaſt failure, in acts of attrition, contrition, mortification and repentance. They might have proved not only by probable reaſons, but by indubitable facts, the ſufficiency of theſe and other known cauſes to produce all the effects commonly aſcribed to grace, even the moſt aſtoniſhing that ever appeared in ſaints, confeſſors, or martyrs. Nay they might have ſhewn that effects more aſtoniſhing, and many of them better vouched than moſt of theſe, have been and are ſtill daily produced in men, whom it would be blaſphemous to repute under the divine influence. ALCIPHRON might have illuſtrated this argument in his ſerious character, by quoting the ſaints, confeſſors, and martyrs of idolatry and hereſy ; and LYSICLES in his gayer character, by quoting thoſe of atheiſm, and of the moſt abominable vices as well as the moſt indifferent cuſtoms, of paederaſty for inſtance and of long beards.

I AM thinking what EUPHRANOR would have replied to the minute philoſophers, and can diſcover no reply worthy of that ſolidity and that candor which render him equally admirable and amiable. He might have ſaid indeed that he was miſunderſtood by them, that the parity he inſiſted on was not meant to "conſiſt in a proof of grace, as well as force from "the effects; that it was only meant to anſwer an objection "againſt the doctrine of grace, ſuppoſing it proved from "revelation, and not to prove it's exiſtence; that therefore if "the parity was ſufficient to prove the poſſibility of believ-"ing grace without an idea of it, the objection they had made "was anſwered, and he aimed at no more." But I think that, as minute philoſophers as I am willing to allow ALCIPHRON and LYSICLES to have been, they would have maintained very eaſily the pertinence of their objection, and the inſufficiency of EUPHRANOR's anſwer.

THEY might have ſaid, there is not even the parity you now ſuppoſe between force and grace. Our objection againſt the latter did, in effect, anticipate your reply: and if we allowed your reply to be a good one, it would neither ſtrengthen your cauſe, nor weaken ours. The parity between force and grace, which you confine now to a poſſibility of believing one as well as the other, is not ſufficient; becauſe it is not real. The poſſibility of believing force is nothing more than the poſſibility of believing that every effect has a cauſe, tho the cauſe be unknown to us, and the propriety of the word conſiſts in the application of it to no other cauſe. The diſparity and impropriety do not ariſe from our having no idea of grace, for it is true that we have none of force; but they ariſe from hence, that there is not the ſame poſſibility of believing a cauſe whereof we have no idea, and which cannot be

be aſcertained by its effects, as there is of believing one whereof we have no idea indeed, but which may be aſcertained by it's effects. You aſſume grace as a cauſe of one particular kind, an immediate influence of God on the mind, and you apply it to effects that may have cauſes of ſeveral kinds. Should a word be vented to ſignify a moral cauſe of effects purely phyſical, or a phyſical cauſe of effects purely moral, you would laugh at the invention, and you would be in the right. But is it a jot leſs ridiculous to aſſign a particular cauſe, either natural or ſupernatural, of effects that may be produced by any or all of theſe, and to think to ſave the abſurdity by ſaying, that the word invented to denote this cauſe has no idea attached to it, no more than that of force?

The uſe of the word force can have no equivocal conſequence, the uſe of the word grace may. The teſtimony, nay the conviction of men that they felt the influence of this unknown cauſe, would not take off the equivocation. How ſhould it, after all the examples that may be brought from daily experience? A real enthuſiaſt doubts no more of his perceptions of the operations of grace informing his mind and determining his will, than he doubts of his perceptions of the action of outward objects on his ſenſes, and perhaps leſs.

Another thing, which I imagine that the minute philoſophers would have ſaid to Euphranor, is this. Since the parity you endeavor to eſtabliſh between force and grace cannot be ſo eſtabliſhed as to anſwer your purpoſe on any principles of reaſon; it remains, that the notion of grace cannot be received, nor the word employed on any other authority, than that of implicit faith in the revelation by which you ſuppoſe the exiſtence of grace proved. That authority obliges us to believe an action or an influence of God on his elect, the man-

ner of which no human idea can reach. But on what authority, EUPHRANOR, do you anſwer our " objection againſt " the doctrine of grace, by ſuppoſing it proved by revela- " tion ?" If you have proved this fact, that the chriſtian revelation, in which the doctrine of grace is contained, was made by God to mankind, as all facts and eſpecially one of this importance ought to be proved, for every other kind of proof proves nothing, we will agree, tho there be not the ſame reaſon for admitting grace as for admitting force, that both are to be received alike. Our objection was inſufficient, but your anſwer then was unneceſſary; for ſurely nothing can be more unneceſſary, than to go about to eſtabliſh on probable arguments what is already eſtabliſhed on demonſtration: and the real exiſtence of grace has been already demonſtrated, if the truth of the revelation, in every part of it, has been ſo; ſince no propoſition can be more demonſtrated than this, that a doctrine taught by infinite wiſdom and truth is a true doctrine. If you have not proved this fact, and we think you have ſcarce attempted it by the proper proofs, your argument is a pure ſophiſm. When we urge that the doctrine of grace, or any other chriſtian doctrine, is inconceivable, or that it is pregnant with abſurd conſequences, and therefore unworthy of God; this is urged in ſtrictneſs, ex abundantiâ, for we do not give up the fundamental point, which is, that the authenticity of your ſcriptures, in the whole and in every part of them, and the truth by conſequence of your revelation, has not been yet proved. When you ſuppoſe the contrary, therefore, in diſputing with us, you beg the queſtion about a principle, in order to confirm a conſequence. Thus it ſeems to me, that the diſpute between EUPHRANOR and the minute philoſophers would have ended. What I have ſaid upon it can be ſcarce called a digreſſion; ſince this compariſon of force and grace ſerves admirably

mirably well to exemplify what has been ſaid concerning the art and artifice of the mind in the proper and improper uſe of words, to which no determinate ideas are annexed.

SECT. VII.

MANY other arts there are by which the human mind endeavors to help itſelf in the acquiſition and communication of knowledge. Some of them are as liable to abuſe as theſe which have been mentioned, and all of them are abuſed more or leſs, to the production and propagation of error; for I preſume, from what I have the means of obſerving, that this would be found true, on a ſtrict examination, even in the applications of geometrical knowledge. But it is time I ſhould put an end to this eſſay, that becomes a treatiſe in bulk at leaſt, if not in matter nor method. That I may not conclude too abruptly however, even for ſuch a rambling eſſay; it is neceſſary I ſhould proceed to diſtinguiſh, in a few more inſtances, between real and imaginary knowledge, the natural powers and the arts, the arts and the artifices of the human mind: and if theſe inſtances ſhould lead me further than I intend, you will pleaſe to aſcribe this prolixity to my love of truth, and to my deſire of giving you all the ſatisfaction I can.

I WILL obſerve, therefore, that as the ſagacity of the mind has invented various arts whereby to improve the other faculties and even itſelf, and to carry their united forces a little further than the immediate leſſons of nature carry them; ſo the affections of the mind have not only turned theſe arts frequently into artifice, an example or two of which we have ſeen, but have gone further. They have not only ſlid imperceptibly, but have plunged openly into artifice; and phi-

loſophers, thoſe that I intend here, ſeem to acquire knowledge only as a neceſſary ſtep to error: when they have done this, when they have loſt ſight of the former, they grow ſo fond of the latter, that they eſteem it no longer an human, but raiſe it, by an imaginary apotheoſis, up to a divine ſcience; which is, of all others the moſt pernicious artifice of the mind, according to my lord BACON, and according to truth. "Peſſima res eſt errorum apotheoſis, et pro peſte intellectûs "habenda eſt ſi vanis accedat veneratio."

ARE theſe lovers of wiſdom, theſe ſearchers of truth, you may well aſk, nothing better than venders of falſe wares, venders of hypothetical ſyſtems at beſt, and often of ſuch as are entirely fantaſtical? I fear that they are: and that the only excuſe to be made for them is, that they ſometimes deceive themſelves firſt. They put me in mind of a paſſage in PLUTARCH, who compares the ſtoics to ſhips that ſet out under auſpicious names, the SUCCESS or the SWIFTSURE for inſtance, and who are beaten by tempeſts in their voyage or caſt away. The great miſchief is, that the implicit paſſenger ſhares the fate of the unwary mariner. In ſhort, ſo it is: the moſt irrational of all proceedings paſs for the utmoſt efforts of human reaſon; and that philoſophy, which pretends to teach us the ſublimeſt truths, ſerves only to amuſe mankind in a middle or low region between truth and error, knowledge and ignorance.

LET us now reſume the diviſion of our ideas into ſuch as are natural and ſuch as are artificial. Thoſe of the firſt ſort are ſuch as God appointed them to be, and are, therefore, real human ideas. Thoſe of the ſecond are framed by the mind, ſometimes under the direction of judgment, and ſometimes under the prevalent influence of imagination, and

and are accordingly ſometimes real and ſometimes fantaſtic. Real ideas are defined, by Mr. Locke, to be "ſuch as have a "foundation in nature, a conformity with the real Being and "exiſtence of things, or with their architypes. Fantaſtical ideas then are ſuch as have not this foundation, nor this conformity. Now this definition requires a little commentary to make it more clear, and more exact too, if I miſtake not, in one part of it at leaſt.

Our ſimple ideas are all real, whether they be ideas of the primary or of the ſecondary qualities of bodies, as ſome philoſophers ſpeak: or, as I had rather ſay, whether they be ſuch as all body excites in us, like thoſe of extenſion, ſolidity, figure, diviſibility and mobility; or whether they be ſuch as particular bodies excite in us, like thoſe of colors, ſounds, ſmells, taſtes, and the whole tribe of tangible qualities. But in our complex ideas of ſubſtances, the caſe is not the ſame. They muſt be real as long as they are conformable to the combinations of ſimple ideas that exiſt in the ſubſtances which cauſe them. But they are liable to become fantaſtical, becauſe it is in the power of the mind to form them without any regard to exiſtence, and becauſe their reality neither is nor can be founded in any thing but real exiſtence actual or paſt. The reaſon of this, which Mr. Locke gives where he treats of the reality of human knowledge, is ſo obvious that a very little reflection muſt ſuggeſt it to every thinking man, in the preſent ſtate of philoſophy. The real conſtitutions of ſubſtances being entirely unknown, it is as impoſſible we ſhould know which of the powers that cauſe our ſimple ideas can coexiſt, and which cannot, any other way than by experience, as it is that we ſhould know what theſe powers are. Whenever we frame ideas, therefore, of ſubſtances, without being authorized by exiſtence, theſe complex ideas muſt needs be

fantaſtical; ſince they are compoſed of ſimple ideas proceeding from powers whoſe co-exiſtence is, for aught we know, impoſſible. As obvious and as deciſive as this reaſon is, it has not hindered men from exerciſing, even on ſubſtances, the power by which they boaſt themſelves able to frame ideas of what may exiſt, as well as of what does exiſt, or has exiſted. Thus PLATO and others, both before and ſince his time, have peopled inviſible worlds with ſo much poetical licence, that one is tempted to think of him, who ſeems to have been above the lowneſs of ſuperſtition, that he was very little in earneſt, and meaned rather to amuſe than inſtruct an age wherein the marvelous was ſure to pleaſe.

IT is the abuſe and miſapplication of this power, that has opened an inexhauſtible ſource of fantaſtical ideas and notions, which have been the bane of philoſophy, and have infected almoſt every branch of ſcience. The proofs are innumerable; and the inſtances that may be produced are liable neither to objection nor evaſion among men who join candor with knowledge; two qualifications that are inſeparable from the love of truth; that promote one another in the diſcovery of it; that ſhould always go together, and ſcarce ever do ſo. Fantaſtical ideas and notions of every conceivable kind, and even of ſubſtances immortal and mortal, celeſtial and infernal, divine and human, or amphibious beings that partake of the two natures, ſtare us in the face whenever we look into the hiſtories, traditions and philoſophical remains that are come down to us from the remoteſt antiquity. The ſame phaenomena appear in all thoſe of the intervening ages: and to ſay the truth, ſcience, or rather that which paſſed for ſcience, in many of theſe, was compoſed of little elſe. In theſe latter ages, even ſince the reſurrection of letters, ſince the improvement of philoſophy and of human reaſon, ſeveral ideas and notions

notions that were principles of imaginary knowledge to the antients have been preſerved in eſteem and veneration: as if that, which had no foundation in nature three thouſand years ago, could have acquired it ſince, and ideas which were fantaſtical in their minds could ripen into reality in ours. They are not the leſs fantaſtical neither for having been purged of ſome circumſtantial abſurdities, and rendered a little more plauſible by ſoftenings and refinements. It muſt be confeſſed, that how deficient ſoever the antient philoſophers might be in real, they left ſcarce any thing new to be invented in imaginary ſcience. But they left much to be improved: and this taſk ſeveral of the moderns have executed moſt ſucceſsfully. We may ſay of fantaſtical ideas, in general, what TULLY ſays of one kind of them, that of prognoſtications by dreams, at the cloſe of his treatiſe on divination; that the ſolicitude and fear they cauſe would have fallen into contempt, if philoſophers, who ſeemed to be perfect maſters of reaſon, had not taken upon them to be protectors of dreams.

BUT theſe general reflections would be more ſeaſonable after ſome that are more particular, and that remain to be made. As far as we have gone, we have ſeen our way, I think, very clearly: and the diſtinction between real and fantaſtical ideas of ſubſtances is ſo well eſtabliſhed, that they cannot be eaſily confounded. The diſtinction agrees with one part of Mr. LOCKE's definition; and is founded in the ſame reaſon. But there is another part of this definition, which ſeems too inaccurately expreſſed in the chapter of real and fantaſtical ideas, and quite untrue, as well as a little inconſiſtent with what he advances elſewhere, according to the explanation of it in the chapter of the reality of knowledge. In the definition it is ſaid, that our ideas are real when they have a conformity with their architypes. In the explanation it is ſaid, that "all our "complex ideas, except thoſe of ſubſtances, being architypes

" of the mind's own making, not intended to be copies of " any thing, nor referred to the exiſtence of any thing, as to " their originals, cannot want any conformity neceſſary to " real knowledge." Conformity with what? With themſelves? That meaning is too abſurd to be ſuppoſed. With other ideas of what exiſts, or has exiſted? That cannot be intended neither; for theſe ideas are " not copies of any thing, " nor refer to the exiſtence of any thing as to their originals." It remains, therefore, that we underſtand no conformity whatſoever neceſſary to make theſe ideas real, when it is ſaid that they want not any that is neceſſary to make them ſo. Now this propoſition I think abſolutely untrue. There is a conformity, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, tho of another kind, as neceſſary to make theſe ideas real, as the conformity proper to our ideas of ſubſtances is neceſſary to make them real: and all the complex ideas here ſpoken of are real or fantaſtic, as they have or have not this conformity. Thus it will appear, if we do not ſuffer the word architype to perplex our thoughts. If all our complex ideas, except thoſe of ſubſtances, are architypes, they muſt be applicable, and properly and really applicable, to ſomething; for it is at leaſt as fantaſtical to frame an architype applicable, to nothing that is really typified by it as to frame the idea of a ſubſtance that can be referred to no real exiſtence as to the architype of it. When architypes are made by nature, they determine our ideas, as God, the author of nature, has appointed that they ſhould be determined: and the knowledge we acquire by them is real knowledge for us and to all human purpoſes, whether theſe ideas do really reſemble their architypes or not; according to what has been inculcated already, and perhaps more than once. But when complex ideas and notions are framed by the mind to ſerve as architypes in it, they muſt be framed with a conformity to the ſame nature that determines the others, or they will

be fantaſtical and produce no knowledge, or ſuch as is fantaſtical like themſelves. I do not ſay that they muſt be framed ſo as to contain nothing which implies contradiction. They have been ſo framed, indeed, as to imply it on many occaſions, by antient and modern ſages and ſaints. But we will ſuppoſe, that they are ſo no longer: and on that ſuppoſition we ſay, that even this is not ſufficient, and that all theſe ideas muſt have a cloſer conformity than that of bare poſſibility to what we know of the exiſtence of things corporeal or intellectual. Univerſal poſſibility is the range of divine particular actuality, paſſed or preſent, and that in a very confined ſyſtem of human intellect.

The ideas we ſpeak of, it is ſaid, are neither "intended to "be copies of any thing, nor referred to the exiſtence of any "thing as to their originals." If this was abſolutely true, all ſuch ideas would be architypes in a ſtrict ſenſe, and could be conceived no otherwiſe. But it is not abſolutely true. It is rather a definition of fantaſtical, than of real, ideas. Our moſt complex ideas and notions which combine in the greateſt variety, modes and relations, as well as ſimple ideas, are often copies; they are often referred to exiſtences, to particular exiſtences, as to their originals: and when they are not ſo, when they are put together in the mind, as the mind never perceived them put together in exiſtence, tho this may be ſaid to be done "by the free choice of the mind, and "without conſidering any connection they have in nature," yet are they not, when they are real, quite arbitrary, nor quite void of reference to exiſtence. Mr. Locke ſhall prove this for me. He ſays, that one of the ways by which we get theſe complex ideas of mixed modes is experience and obſervation of things themſelves. In all theſe inſtances then, the complex idea is derived from exiſtence, and is a copy firſt, tho

tho it becomes an architype afterwards. It is ſo in the example he brings, in that of ſeeing two men wreſtle. It is ſo in a multitude of others, in all thoſe that are real and of real uſe. Murder is as old as human race, and theft as property. Shall we believe that men were lawgivers and moraliſts, before they were ſpectators of the actions of one another? Invention is another of the ways he mentions, in which, by a voluntary act of the mind, ſeveral ſimple ideas are put together in it, and the architype precedes exiſtence. But even in theſe caſes, the combinations of ideas, aſcribed to the invention of the mind, are ſuggeſted to it by other combinations, as it would be eaſy to ſhew in the example brought of printing: and tho the mind cannot be ſaid to copy, when it has no particular exiſtence in view, yet muſt it be allowed to imitate, when it has in view not only it's ſimple ideas, but divers combinations of them, derived immediately or remotely from what exiſts or has exiſted in the ſyſtem of nature: and theſe it has in view always when the complex ideas and notions we frame are not purely fantaſtical. Thoſe of parricide and ſacrilege were framed perhaps by ſome men, for they were not by all, before either of theſe crimes had been committed; and ſo they might, without doing much honor to the boaſted power of knowing à priori and independently of exiſtence. The relation of father and ſon is added to the complex idea of murder in one: and as ſoon as one order of men and their property came to be reputed ſacred, it required no ſuperior intelligence to foreſee that they might be robbed as well as other men. But the mathematician never ſaw a circle mathematically true, ſuch as he deſcribes, and whoſe properties he conſiders: neither did Tully ever ſee ſuch an image of virtue as he propoſes, and whoſe principles and effects are explained in his offices. Be it ſo. But the mathematician, who conſiders the properties of a circle, a ſquare, or a rectangle, had obſerved the various

rious terminations of extenſion before he turned mathematician, and the moraliſt had obſerved, wherein the good and evil of ſociety conſiſts, and had framed, on what he obſerved, ideas and notions concerning virtue and vice, and the perfection of human nature before he writ of ethics. The ideas and notions of both, to be productive of real knowledge, muſt be derived from exiſtence, and referred back again to it.

According to Mr. Locke, our knowledge "concerning "theſe ideas is real, and reaches things themſelves; becauſe "we intend things no farther, than as they are conformable to "our ideas." Theſe ideas then, to be real, muſt reach things themſelves; that is, they muſt be rightly abſtracted from things that exiſt, and they muſt be applied to things, no farther than things are conformable to them. This now coincides enough with the opinion I advance. Our ideas are fantaſtic, and our knowledge imaginary, when the former are framed without a ſufficient conformity to exiſtence, and when they are applied to things to which they are not applicable; for as ideas and notions may be void of all reality in themſelves, ſo may they become fantaſtical by a fantaſtical application.

The miſtake about theſe complex ideas carries much reſemblance to that which Mr. Locke expoſes ſo juſtly about maxims or axioms. Theſe have been reputed the principles of ſcience, whereas they are in truth the reſult of it, when they are evident; and cannot paſs therefore with any propriety for the praecognita and praeconceſſa, for which they have been vended in the ſchools. Juſt ſo the complex ideas we ſpeak of are called architypes; and men infatuate one another enough to imagine that there is a ſuperior intellectual region, as it were, a region of ideas that are the principles of general ſcientifical knowledge, from whence particular knowledge is to be deduced, and

by which it is to be controuled. Whereas in truth all our ideas and notions are fantaſtical, as all our maxims are falſe, when they are not founded in particular knowledge: when they are carried further than evidence, the criterion of truth, accompanies them; and above all, when they are repugnant, as philoſophical and theological ideas and notions frequently are, to this very evidence and to our knowledge of things as they exiſt.

SOMETHING has been ſaid concerning ideas and notions in a former part of this eſſay, that may ſeem to render what is here ſaid about ſuch as are fantaſtical the leſs neceſſary. But having occaſion to ſpeak of theſe, I chuſe rather to run the riſque of repetition (uſefully I hope to the great end of fixing the bounds of real knowledge) than not to bring into a fuller view this intellectual artifice, which has ſerved to build up ſo much imaginary knowledge, at the expence of neglecting the other, and of corrupting it in all it's parts. It was by the means of fantaſtical ideas and notions that chemiſtry was turned into alchymy; aſtronomy into judicial aſtrology; phyſics, by which I underſtand the contemplation of mind as well as body, into theurgic and natural magic; and the religion of nature into various ſyſtems of plain, but almoſt blaſphemous, doctrines of abſurd myſteries and ſuperſtitious rites. All theſe effects proceeded from the vain philoſophy of men more intent to imagine what may be, than to obſerve what is: and if we add to theſe ſuch as have proceeded from fantaſtical notions of abſtraction, upon which the tedious and impertinent ſubtilties of ontology are founded, we ſhall have before us very nearly the ſum of all that learned error into which men have fallen by reaſoning on fantaſtical ideas and notions in ſearch of real: as if it was below the majeſty of the human mind to ſeek for reality and truth out of itſelf: and as if our ſenſes

were given us only to excite our intellect, and not to inform it by experiment and obſervation.

The principal occaſions, on which the mind exerciſes the artifice ſpoken of in framing ideas that are fantaſtical, may be reduced to theſe three. Philoſophers invent hypothetical ideas and notions in order to erect on them ſuch ſyſtems as cannot be erected on real ideas and notions, that is on ideas and notions that have a known foundation in nature. They treat of ideas and notions that are incomplete and inadequate, as if they were complete and adequate. They dogmatize on obſcure and confuſed ideas and notions, as if they were clear and diſtinct. Let us produce in this eſſay one example at leaſt of the firſt. Your patience and mine too may be worn out by that time: and the examples omitted now may be taken up at ſome other.

SECT. VIII.

I might have reckoned hypotheſes among thoſe arts of the mind that degenerate into artifice; for ſuch they have been often. The greateſt part of ancient philoſophy, almoſt all except ethics, was nothing elſe: and to mention no other among the moderns, Des Cartes had much to anſwer for of this kind. His great reputation put hypotheſes into faſhion; and natural philoſophy became a ſort of phyſical romance. But this manner of impoſing imaginary for real knowledge is over, whilſt one more abſurd remains in credit; and, whilſt naturaliſts can ſlide no longer from art into artifice without being detected, metaphyſicians ſet out in artifice, and they ſucceed. An hypotheſis in phyſics can make it's way now no faſter nor no further than experience countenances and ſupports it. But in metaphyſics it is otherwiſe. Their hypotheſes ſtand alone:

they ſtand in the place of experimental knowledge, are not ſo much as deduced from it by a fair analogy, but are made independently of, and frequently in direct contradiction to it.

They who plead for hypotheſes urge, not very unreaſonably, that they may be of ſome uſe in the inveſtigation of truth, whilſt they are employed; and that they may ſerve to the ſame purpoſe, even when they are diſcovered to be falſe and are laid aſide: as men who have miſſed their way give ſome inſtruction to others to find it. Beſides which they do not ſo much as pretend that any hypotheſis ought to be maintained, if a ſingle phaenomenon ſtands in direct oppoſition to it. I do not agree to this plea in the whole, but to the latter part of it entirely. By that, the criterion of hypotheſes is eſtabliſhed by the favorers of them: we take it as they give it; and this criterion in the phyſical world is real actual exiſtence. The Copernican ſyſtem, itſelf, ſtands on no other bottom. The Newtonian ſyſtem of attraction ſtands on the ſame: and this bottom is grown ſo broad and ſo firm, that neither the jokes of foreign wits, nor the cavils of foreign philoſophers, can ſhake it as far as ſenſible bodies and ſenſible diſtances are concerned. But at the ſame time they who preſume to ſuppoſe it equally certain where inſenſible bodies, the minima naturae, and inſenſible diſtances, are concerned, as ſome of our country men have done, preſume too much; this application of it not having been yet enough confirmed: and they have been accordingly juſtly cenſured for raiſing too haſtily an hypotheſis into a ſyſtem. With ſuch precautions and under ſuch reſtrictions, hypotheſes can do no hurt, nor ſerve to propagate error. But then it is ſurely a ridiculous ſcene to obſerve how confidently ſome metaphyſical philoſophers, who ſhew themſelves extremely ſcrupulous about ſuch hypotheſes as I have mentioned, either admit on the authority of others,

or

or publiſh on their own, not barely as hypotheſes but as demonſtrations, the wildeſt notions imaginable; notions that are founded in nothing known nor knowable, and that can be tried, therefore, by no criterion whatever.

I HAVE ſpoken of phyſics and metaphyſics ſometimes in the uſual ſtile; but I am far from altering the opinion I have already owned, and cannot, therefore, acquieſce to the pretenſions of thoſe who, under the umbrage of a ſuppoſed ſcience that conſiders general natures, eſſences, being in the abſtract, and ſpirit or immaterial ſubſtance, would place themſelves in a rank of philoſophical precedence above thoſe who conſider corporeal nature in the ſeveral phaenomena, and would controul, what they neglect, particular experimental knowledge. As to the ontoſophiſts, they are the lineal deſcendants of the ſchoolmen; and they deal like their progenitors in little elſe than hard words and ſuch abſtract ideas and notions, as render our knowledge neither more diſtinct nor more extenſive, but ſerve to perplex it and to invelope in their obſcurity what is in itſelf very plain. I ſhall neglect them therefore, as the reſt even of the learned world appears to do. The example I am to produce, under this head of hypothetical ideas and notions, ſhall be taken from thoſe philoſophers who uſurp and appropriate to themſelves, as if it were their peculiar province, the doctrine of ſpirits and ſpiritual things; whereas pneumatics taken in this ſenſe, if they are any thing, are as truly objects of phyſics, as pneumatics, taken in a more proper ſenſe, for that branch of natural philoſophy whoſe object is the air we breathe. This diſtinction, however, has been eſtabliſhed; and by the help of it, whilſt naturaliſts are not at liberty to make hypotheſes that are not founded in ſome degree of experimental knowledge, and that are not liable to be controuled by it in all their parts and in all their pro-

progreſs, metaphyſicians are left at liberty to frame as many fantaſtical ſyſtems as they pleaſe on ideas and notions purely hypothetical, without any regard to this foundation, or this controul, as we obſerved juſt now.

As ſoon as men began to reflect on their own nature, and on that of all the bodies which ſurrounded them, they could not fail to obſerve ſolidity, extenſion, figure, diviſibility, and mobility, the moſt apparent properties of body or matter. As little could they fail to obſerve the operations of their own minds, in which they had the perceptions of theſe ideas, and to frame ideas of thought, and of the ſeveral modes of thinking, particularly of that which has the power of beginning motion. None of theſe ideas were contained in their ideas of body, nor neceſſarily connected with them: and that of a power to begin motion, which they obſerved to be in the whole animal kind, and which they knew conſciouſly to be the effect of thought, muſt ſtrike them as a ſuperior property to that of mobility, with which they had occaſion to compare it every inſtant. Taking it for granted then, that they knew, as ſoon as they began to philoſophize, all the perceivable properties of matter, they concluded, that ſuch things as could not be accounted for by theſe, were to be accounted for by the properties of ſome unperceivable or unperceived matter, or elſe by the properties of ſome other ſubſtance. The firſt aſſumption was that of the moſt antient philoſophers: the other was made much later, at leaſt it was much later that extended and non-extended ſubſtance were plainly contra-diſtinguiſhed.

Thus the diſtinction of body and ſoul came to be made and eſtabliſhed among almoſt all the philoſophers. It would be tedious even to run over the confuſed notions that were entertained

tertained about ſoul. It was fire; but a divine fire to ſome: it was air to others: a fifth element to others, "quintam "quandam naturam *," and therefore ARISTOTLE called it by a new name entelekia, to ſignify a certain continued and perpetual motion. "Sic ipſum animum entelekian appellat no-"vo nomine, quaſi quandam continuatam motionem et pe-"rennem †." In a word, it was ſomething, they knew not what, which they thought fit to call breath or ſpirit, for a reaſon obvious enough: and the notion of it anſwered philoſophical purpoſes, in metaphyſics, juſt as well as that of occult qualities anſwered them in phyſics. A vaſt profuſion of ſouls followed. They were created by the exorbitant power of hypotheſis as faſt and as often as they were wanted. There was an univerſal ſoul common to the whole ſyſtem of corporeal being, or a ſoul of the world; for the world was, in the imagination of ſome of the antients, a great animal, and conſiſted, like the animals it contains, of a body and a ſoul. There were particular ſouls for celeſtial and terreſtrial bodies, a ſoul of the ſun, a ſoul of every ſtar and planet, a vegetative ſoul for plants, a ſenſitive ſoul for other animals; and for man there was an ample proviſion of three, of the two laſt and of a rational ſoul, which was a participation of the Divine mind, or an emanation from it, or an infuſion out of it.

IF we deſcend from thoſe times to our own, we ſhall find the ſame hypotheſis maintained with a little leſs confuſion of opinions, in more preciſe and uniform terms at leaſt, but ſtill as unintelligibly as ever. SPINOZA, indeed, acknowledged but one ſubſtance, and that matter; as abſurdly as others have acknowledged but one ſubſtance, and that ſpirit. On the principle of the former, the vegetative, the ſenſitive,

* Tuſc. quaeſt. † Ibid.

ſitive, and even the rational ſoul can be nothing elſe than matter differently fermented and ſubtilized in ſyſtems of it differently organized; for which opinion whatever is ſaid, ſhould be ſaid, and might be ſaid, without admitting the principle of SPINOZA in it's full extent; without ſuppoſing God a material being, from whence the moſt abſurd conſequences would follow, and without denying his exiſtence, which would imply, if that be poſſible, more. But the general run of opinion aſſumes the ſoul to be a ſpiritual ſubſtance, and a ſpiritual ſubſtance to be unextended, indiviſible, and therefore immortal. Now this aſſumption helps the hypotheſis ſo little, that the extravagancies fancy builds on it are as great, and the difficulties oppoſed to it perhaps greater, than when the ſoul was deemed material by ſome Chriſtian, as well as Pagan philoſophers; for that it was ſo your learned friends will I am ſure confeſs. Many notions, extravagant and fantaſtical to the utmoſt, might be cited. Can there be any thing more extravagant, or that implies contradiction more groſly than to divide this indiviſible ſubſtance, like the myſtic divines, who had a precedent for it in that myſtic philoſopher PLATO, into an upper and lower part? The good madmen mean well, no doubt: but there is reaſon to ſuſpect that, among their diſciples, the lower part of the ſoul and the body are much defiled by imagination and ſenſation too, whilſt the purity of the upper part, where the underſtanding and the will reſide, preſerves the conſcience in a moſt heavenly tranquility.

SHOULD you object to this inſtance of extravagant opinions, built on the hypotheſis of the ſoul conſidered as a ſimple unextended being united to the body, becauſe it is taken from thoſe of madmen who are capable of framing the moſt extravagant and falſeſt notions on the moſt reaſonable and evident principles; let us lay aſide all other inſtances, and produce as

the moſt extravagant of all that wherein every man who deals in theology mad or ſober concurs; that opinion for the ſake of which this hypotheſis of the ſoul was invented, and which is as little reconcileable to the wiſdom of God and to the moral ideas of juſtice and goodneſs, as thought is to all the properties that we know of matter. The human ſoul then, which participates of the divine nature by emanation, by infuſion, or by ſome other incomprehenſible act, on account of which alone we are ſaid to be made after the image of God, is confined to the human body, and is diffuſed through the whole to inform and to govern; or has a principal reſidence, like the ſeat of empire, in the pineal gland, or in that part of the brain where I have read that there is a ſort of nervous juice, the ſource of animal ſpirits, of a moſt fragrant ſmell; and which puts me in mind of the perfume that the inſpiring divinity ſpread in the temples where oracles were delivered to the Pagans. Whilſt the ſoul is thus immerſed in matter, the luſtre of it is obſcured by this removal from it's divine original. The force and energy of it is clogged, nay it ſeems ſince the fall to contract an inclination to corporeity, and to aſſimilate in ſome ſort with this inferior nature, as if they were homogeneous. Our firſt parents received from ſenſible objects, after their fall, ſuch ſtrong impreſſions and ſuch deep traces in their brains, "de ſi grands veſtiges, et des traces ſi profondes*," that they may well have communicated theſe to the brains of all their deſcendants. Now the thoughts of the ſoul being neceſſarily conformable to the traces that are in the brain, it is you ſee demonſtrated moſt metaphyſically, that in this reſpect the ſoul is dependent on the body, and it's thoughts and inclinations on the thoughts and inclinations of thoſe who begot the body it inhabits in a perpetual gradation of generations down from ADAM and EVE. Thus the ſoul, that ſpiritual monarch of the human ſyſtem, is

* MALB. l. 2. c. 7.

ſubject not only to a limitation of power, but to a determination to govern ill. The ſoul does not remain long indeed in this ſtate, becauſe the ſyſtem it governs is ſoon diſſolved by death. But the ſhort time it remains in it, decides of it's ſtate for eternity. It ſeems to be delivered from the body, and to be reſtored to the full force of it's nature and to the free exerciſe of it's powers, in order only to ſuffer, for the moſt part, during an eternity, for what it did in the government of the body when it enjoyed neither during a moment. As ſoon as philoſophers and divines are able to reconcile all this to their ideas of the wiſdom, juſtice and goodneſs of God, the hypotheſis will be no longer neceſſary, at leaſt to the former; ſince they will not find it at all more difficult to reconcile thought to their ideas of the properties of matter.

The taſk would be endleſs, and I ſhall neither give myſelf nor you the trouble to enumerate more of the fantaſtical ideas, notions and opinions, that have been raiſed on this hypotheſis of a ſimple immaterial active being, which underſtands and wills, or by which we are made able to underſtand and will. I make this diſtinction, becauſe philoſophers who ſet out from the ſame goal take very different ways in the purſuit of ideas equally fantaſtical. Some of them baniſh out of the whole extent of Being every thing, except ideas and ſpirit whereof we can have no idea, and which is only known by conſciouſneſs. Nothing in heaven nor earth, none of thoſe bodies which we repute to be ſenſible objects have any exiſtence out of ſome mind or other. They may exiſt eternally, and be always actually preſent in an eternal ſpirit; but they have beſides this no exiſtence, except one that is occaſionally communicated. They exiſt in created ſpirits, when they are perceived; and they ceaſe to exiſt, when they are not perceived there. Other philoſophers again declare the exiſtence of body hard to be

be proved; whilſt that of ſpirit, under this notion of it, needs no proof according to them. They pretend to have a knowledge of immaterial ſpirit that excludes all doubt, and they aſſume hypothetically that there is ſuch an entity as body, which is the very reverſe, I preſume, of the moſt evident dictates of common ſenſe. But however, on this bold aſſumption that there is ſuch a being as body, they proceed to account for the union of the ſoul with body on one hand, and with God on the other; and ſo multiplying hypothetical ideas one on another, they open a fantaſtical ſcene of ſcience wherein every man's imagination (for every man has the ſame right to imagine) is his ſole guide, and wherein it is plain from their extravagant writings that they have, and from the nature of the thing that they can have, no other guide.

Des Cartes, who might not ſo much as dream perhaps that philoſophers would ſet themſelves in good earneſt to baniſh body out of the univerſe and the univerſe with it, affirmed two ſubſtances, one whoſe eſſence is extenſion, and to which all the modifications of extenſion belong, and one whoſe eſſence is thought, and to which all the modifications of thinking belong. Now both theſe definitions are ſo evidently falſe that every man may know them to be ſo who conſiders them without philoſophical prejudice, of all prejudices the ſtrongeſt. How ſtrong it is, appears in this very inſtance; for when Des Cartes affirmed extenſion alone to be the eſſence of body, he was led by his philoſophical prejudices to affirm an identical propoſition and to beg a queſtion. He affirmed that body is body, for he ſuppoſed the plenum. It is true we cannot ſeparate body in our ideas from extenſion, neither can we conceive body excluſively of ſolidity. But we can ſeparate extenſion from ſolidity in our ideas; and therefore, as Mr. Locke obſerves, if it be a good

argument " that ſpirit is different from body, becauſe think-
" ing includes not the idea of extenſion in it, ſpace or ex-
" tenſion alone is not body, becauſe it includes not the idea
" of ſolidity in it." In ſhort, they are ſo evidently diſtinct ideas that he who confounds them in words muſt diſcern their difference in his underſtanding, whether he will or no. The difference is ſo evident, that if the plenum was admitted, and pure ſpace rejected, yet ſtill the definition of the Carteſians would be imperfect; for the eſſence of body, throughout this imaginary plenum, could not be extenſion alone. Solidity could not be baniſhed out of it, but extenſion would continue to include ſolidity, as ſolidity is allowed to include extenſion; and extenſion and ſolidity would be two diſtinct ideas, but two eſſential properties of the ſame ſubſtance ſtill.

The definition of thinking ſubſtance is not truer than this of extended ſubſtance, and the falſity of it is obvious to conſtant experience. That we live, and move, and think according to certain human modes of thinking, and that there muſt be ſomething in the conſtitution of our ſyſtem of being beyond the known properties of matter to produce ſuch phaenomena as theſe, are undeniable truths. But here certainty ends. What that ſomething is we know not, and ſurely it is time we ſhould be convinced that we cannot know it. Thankfulneſs and modeſty would become us better than philoſophical and theological aſſurance: thankfulneſs, when we look up to the great Author of all natures for raiſing ours either in kind or in degree above that of any other animal; and modeſty, when we look down on ourſelves to avow our ignorance. Inſtead of this, vanity and preſumption determine philoſophers to conclude, that ſince they cannot account for the phaenomena of the mind, by what they know very ſuperficially of

ſolid extended ſubſtance, this mind muſt be ſome other ſubſtance. On this foundation they reaſon admirably well à priori, and prove with much plauſibility that this mind, this ſoul, this ſpirit, is not material and is immortal. In the ſame manner they proceed, and well they may, to prove any thing that metaphyſics and theology want to have proved. But this foundation is an aſſumption that cannot ſtand an examination à poſteriori, and that if it could ſtand it would carry us but one ſtep forward in knowledge; for if nothing which is an object of real knowledge could be oppoſed to the immateriality and immortality of this ſubſtance, the inſuperable difficulty of accounting for the action of mind on body, and of body on mind, that are reciprocally and in their turns both active and paſſive, would ſtop our philoſophical enquiries. The divine alone would have made a ſtep ſufficient for his purpoſe. Thus do the reputed maſters of human reaſon advance propoſitions as demonſtrated truths, which have not even the merit of a tolerable hypotheſis. But it is not enough to affirm like them. I muſt prove what I ſay, by appealing to that criterion of truth, from which there lies no appeal, to clear and determinate ideas duly abſtracted from the phaenomena of nature, and to an intuitive knowledge of their agreement or diſagreement. Now this, I think, it will not be hard to do.

I DO not pretend to deny the poſſible exiſtence of ſpiritual, that is, according to the preſent notion, of immaterial beings. I have no more right to deny that there are ſuch, than the perſons juſt mentioned have to affirm it. God alone, the Author of all beings, knows how many different kinds of ſubſtances, how many various ſorts of beings his omnipotent will has made to exiſt. But this I ſay, that we have not the ſame proof of the exiſtence of unextended and ſpiritual,

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as we have of extended and ſolid ſubſtance. We have not the ſame proof, becauſe we have not the ſame knowledge on which to ground any. We gueſs probably, if you pleaſe, from what we obſerve of our own minds that one exiſts; but we know as certainly, as God has given us the means of knowing outward objects, that the other exiſts. The ideas we receive by reflection are in this caſe and in this reſpect equivocal, they do not reach up to the apparent nature of the ſubſtance that cauſes them. But the ideas we receive from ſenſation are not ſo; they do reach up to the apparent nature of the ſubſtance that cauſes them. The former do not ſo much as conſtitute what Mr. Locke calls a nominal eſſence: the latter do. There are many queſtions to be aſked, no doubt, concerning body, which it is impoſſible to anſwer, as well as concerning ſpirit; becauſe we are made incapable of knowing the real eſſence of any ſubſtance: and if there was no other difference, we might as well affirm the exiſtence of immaterial as of material ſubſtance. But there is another difference; and it is not enough to have hinted it, I muſt explain it.

Mr. Locke takes much pains to ſhew, that the notion of ſpirit involves no more difficulty nor obſcurity in it than that of body *: and yet I think I can make him prove the contrary for me, and ſhew againſt his own aſſertion, that we have "more and clearer primary ideas belonging to body "than we have belonging to immaterial ſpirit." Primary ideas are the ideas of ſuch qualities as exiſt always in the ſubſtance to which they belong, whether they are perceived or not. They are, therefore, eſſential to it, and productive, by their operations, of thoſe ſecondary qualities which may be ſaid only to exiſt in our perceptions of them. Of the firſt ſort are ſolidity and extenſion, to mention no others, the primary

* Eſſay, l. 2. c. 23.

primary qualities, and in our ideas the eſſence of matter of which we can frame no conception excluſively of them. Theſe notions I have taken from Mr. Locke, and they lead me to aſk what the primary ideas are of ſpirit or immaterial ſubſtance? The primary idea or the eſſence of it is thought; as body is the extended, this is the thinking ſubſtance, ſays Des Cartes. Thought then, actual thought, is the eſſence of the ſoul or ſpirit, and by conſequence ſo inſeparable from it that we cannot conceive the ſoul or ſpirit to exiſt ſeparately from, or excluſively of thought. But this I know to be untrue: and I may well own, ſince Locke has owned the ſame, that I have "one of thoſe dull ſouls that does not perceive itſelf "always to contemplate ideas." I diſtinguiſh very well between being aſleep and being awake. I continue to live but not to think during the ſoundeſt ſleep, and the faculties of my ſoul and body awake together. Thus evidently do I know, that thought is no more the eſſence of ſoul than motion of body: and if thought is not ſo, I aſk what is?

Body is capable of receiving and communicating motion by impulſe; but without ſolidity and extenſion it would be capable of neither. Thought, not being the eſſence of the ſoul, can be nothing but an action of it, and thus far anſwers motion in body. But what is it then which anſwers ſolidity and extenſion, and is the primary quality of ſpirit? Is it immateriality? Is it the negation of material eſſence? No man will, I preſume, give ſo ſilly an anſwer. At leaſt no man who does, muſt expect a reply. He who affirms, that there is in the compoſition of the human ſyſtem, a ſubſtance to which cogitability belongs, as well as a ſubſtance to which mobility belongs, muſt have ideas of the firſt of theſe ſubſtances prior in the order of nature to that of it's cogitability, as he has ideas of the ſecond prior in the ſame order to that of its mo-

bility; or he muſt talk at random, and affirm what he does not know. His ſuppoſed diſtinct ſubſtance muſt ſink into nothing, or be confounded with the other; for it will coſt a reaſonable mind much leſs to aſſume, that a ſubſtance known by ſome of it's properties may have others that are unknown, and may be capable, in various ſyſtems, of operations quite inconceivable by us, according to the deſigns of infinite wiſdom, than to aſſume that there is a ſubſtance concerning which men do not pretend to know what it is, but merely what it is not.

It may be ſaid, Locke has ſaid it, that we know no more of the ſolid than of the thinking thing, nor how we are extended than how we think. But the compariſon is improper, and unfair. It is improper, becauſe it compares the operation of an aſſumed ſubſtance with the known properties of a real ſubſtance. It is unfair, becauſe it ſlides over and evades the objection that we have not a poſitive idea of any one primary property of ſpirit, or at leaſt that if cogitability be ſuch a primary quality, this definition of the ſoul is no better than that of a moveable ſubſtance would be, if it was given as the full definition of body. But beſides, though the coheſion of the ſolid particles of body be not ſufficiently accounted for by the preſſure of the air, or of any ambient fluid, and tho that ſeeming property of matter, which is called for want of a better name attraction, be not yet perhaps enough eſtabliſhed; yet we have a very clear idea of coheſion in it's effects, by which inſenſible atoms are ſo united and held together, that the bodies they compoſe become ſenſible to us, and give us the ideas of ſolidity and extenſion. Have we any knowledge proportionable to this, as imperfect as it is, of ſoul under the notion of an immaterial ſpirit? It cannot be ſaid that we have. Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude without preſumption

tion againſt two of the greateſt men of their age, againſt DES CARTES, that thinking is not the eſſence of the ſoul; and againſt LOCKE, that a ſolid extended ſubſtance is not quite ſo hard to be conceived as a thinking immaterial one.

BUT LOCKE, much leſs dogmatical than DES CARTES, how far ſoever he favored the reigning opinion, or thought it neceſſary for him to keep meaſures with thoſe who ſupport it, was far from aſſerting the immateriality of the ſoul. He found inducements of probability to this and to the contrary opinion, certainty of demonſtration for neither *. When he is to ſhew that our knowledge is narrower and more confined than our ideas, he brings the inſtance of theſe two, of matter and thinking, and of the impoſſibility of knowing by the contemplation of them, or by any other way, except by revelation, whether that which thinks in us be not material. He ſees "no contradiction in it, that the firſt eternal thinking Being ſhould, if he pleaſed, give to certain ſyſtems of "created ſenſeleſs matter, put together as he thinks fit, "ſome degrees of ſenſe, perception and thought." He endeavors to guard againſt theological choler, by urging "that "the great ends of morality and religion are well enough ſecured without philoſophical proofs of the ſoul's immateriality, ſince it is evident that he who made us——ſenſible, "intelligent beings can," and he adds, "will reſtore us to "the like ſtate of ſenſibility in another world." But all this precaution could not ſave him from the joint attacks of philoſophers and of divines, not very orthodox on other points. They † have inſiſted, ſince thought is not the eſſence of matter, nor an attribute of matter neither, in as much as it

* Eſſay, l. 4. c. 3. † LEIBNITZ, WOOLLASTON, &c.

it does not flow neceſſarily from that eſſence, it cannot have been communicated nor ſuperadded even by omnipotence to any ſyſtem of matter; becauſe eſſences are unchangeable, and attributes uncommunicable; ſo that matter cannot be made to think. The moment any ſyſtem begins to think, it ceaſes to be material: and that which was matter becomes a ſubſtance of another kind. In fine, that it is nonſenſe to aſſert that God "can * ſupperadd a faculty of thinking "to incogitativity, of acting freely to neceſſity, and ſo on †."

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* Rel. of Nat. delineated, §. 9.

† Since it has been obſerved on this occaſion, in how trifling a manner the pretended maſters of abſtract reaſoning ſubject the reality of things to words; it may not be be improper to obſerve another fallacy that runs through all their diſcourſes, concerning the thinking ſubſtance.

When we know with certainty that any being exiſts, many doubts may be raiſed, we may endeavor to ſolve them by hypotheſes, and we may endeavor it in vain: but ſtill they will be no more than difficulties to the ſolution of which our knowledge does not extend. The known truth will remain unſhaken. On the other hand, when we aſſume on probable arguments that any being exiſts, the doubts and difficulties that arife are real objections; becauſe they are probable arguments oppoſed to probable arguments, and the whole being hypotheſis, the whole may be ſhaken.

Theists demonſtrate the exiſtence of one ſupreme, infinite, all-perfect Being. Atheiſts cavil; and, tho they cannot unravel the demonſtration, they oppoſe doubts and difficulties, as if probable arguments, ſuppoſing theſe to be ſuch, could prevail againſt demonſtration Their proceeding is abſurd: and reaſon is evidently on the ſide of the theiſt. But now, are they, who aſſert a diſtinct thinking ſubſtance united in the human ſyſtem, to a material unthinking ſubſtance, in the caſe of the theiſts? Are they who deny this, in the caſe of the atheiſts? Certainly not. The former, except a few who are in the height of a metaphyſical delirium, do not pretend that they can demonſtrate by reaſon what they maintain, and yet they argue as if they had made this demonſtration. This is the fallacy I mean: and I need not go far to ſeek an inſtance of it, ſince I find one in the Religion of Nature delineated, that follows the paſſage I have quoted.

This ſolemn author then, in his third argument for the immortality of the ſoul, drops the queſtion, whether it be immaterial or not, on which he had pronounced ſo dogmatically a few pages before, and aſks, only by way of objection, "whe-"ther that ſoul, be it what it will, which ceaſes to think when the body is not

"fitly

It is hard to ſay, whether in theſe and other common-place reaſonings on the ſame ſubject there is more preſumption, or trifling

" fitly diſpoſed, can think at all when the body is quite diſſolved ?" Now to this queſtion he propoſes to give an anſwer, of which he ſpeaks modeſtly and diffidently, and yet preſumes it may be turned " even into an argument for the im-" mortality of the ſoul."

This anſwer comes out to be nothing better than a ſtring of ſuppoſitions. He, who ſays that the power of thinking is a faculty ſuperadded by the Creator to certain ſyſtems of matter in various degrees and proportions, aſſumes indeed, but he aſſumes conformably to the phaenomena. He, who ſays that thought is the eſſence of a diſtinct ſubſtance united to certain ſyſtems of matter, becauſe he cannot conceive how matter can be made capable of thinking even by omnipotence, aſſumes without any ſupport from the phaenomena, nay even in an apparent contradiction to them. Every inſtance, therefore, of this contradiction is a good argument in favor of the former, and againſt the latter opinion. No matter. The pneumatic philoſopher proceeds as if his firſt propoſition was proved, and he had only a few difficulties to remove rather than objections to refute, as if his doctrine wanted only to be explained. He explains it no more, than he invented it, on the foundation of that which actually is, but on what he thinks may be; and ſo he may argue on, if he finds men idle enough to diſpute much with him, as long as his imagination can ſupply fantaſtic ideas and notions.

The very queſtion whether the " ſoul, which ceaſes to think when the body " is not fitly diſpoſed, can think at all when the body is quite diſſolved," ſuppoſes that there is a ſoul, that is, a diſtinct ſubſtance united to it, tho this neither has been, nor can be proved. The anſwer ſets out by ſuppoſing that this diſtinct ſubſtance is a limited being, limited, obſtructed, clogged by the body. Even here we might interrupt this licentious maker of hypotheſes, and inſiſt that it is not congruous to reaſon to aſſume that a ſubſtance, which is immaterial according to him, which has none above it except the ſubſtance of God himſelf according to St Austin, and by which we are made after the image of God according to all thoſe who maintain the ſame doctrine, for he muſt not be ſuffered to ſlide over any of his, or their extravagant aſſertions—is limited, obſtructed, clogged by that material ſubſtance by which we are allied to the beaſts of the field, and made after the image of other animals.

But to paſs by this, the ſoul then is " limited, it's activity and faculties being " more obſtructed and clogged at one time than another, and moſt of all in ſleep, " or a deliquium." The eyes, the two windows of it's priſon, are ſhut, and the nerves which receive the impreſſions of outward objects, and convey ſenſations to the ſoul, are benumbed. This branch of knowledge is cut off, therefore, in ſuch circumſtances, and thought cannot be exerciſed on objects that do not preſent themſelves to the ſoul. But why then is it not exerciſed on the ideas and

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trifling and playing with words in a ſolemn dogmatical tone. They amount to no more than this. We metaphyſicians and ontoſophiſts

notions that the ſoul is poſſeſſed of already, in the contemplation of which it has no need of ſenſe; ſo much otherwiſe, that detached from ſenſe, and wrapped in pure intellect, the ſoul meditates, and reaſons with greater intenſeneſs and clearneſs about theſe abſtract ideas and notions?

If you aſk this queſtion, you will be anſwered by other ſuppoſitions. You will be told that the uſe of words is neceſſary even in abſtract meditation, that this ſilent language depends on memory, and that memory depends on certain tracks which are made on the brain. You will be told that theſe tracks are the characters of that book wherein the ſoul muſt read to think in this manner; and that when the characters are overcaſt by vapors, or any other way darkened, the ſoul can read them no more till the cloud is diſpelled. You may object that thinking cannot be, on this hypotheſis, the eſſence of the ſoul, or that the ſoul muſt ceaſe to be what it is every time we fall into ſound ſleep, or faint entirely into a deliquium, and return to be what it was before, every time we awake or come out of the deliquium; which differs little from aſſuming a perpetual creation of ſouls every twenty-four hours at leaſt. There is ſomething ſo very ridiculous in this notion, that I ſhould be aſhamed to mention it, if it did not follow neceſſarily that of a ſubſtance whoſe eſſence is thought and who does not always think, and if it was not of uſe to ſhew in every inſtance, as it occurs, the monſtrous abſurdities in which the reaſonings of theſe metaphyſicians are apt to terminate.

The metaphyſician we have to deal with here ſcreens himſelf from the imputation of this abſurdity, as well as he can by a change of terms. He aſſerts only that the ſoul preſerves a capacity of thinking "even in thoſe circumſtances in "which it thinks no more than if the body was deſtroyed:" And from hence he aſſumes, that "it may, and will preſerve this capacity when the body is de-"ſtroyed, cut to pieces, or mouldered to duſt." He aſſerts the firſt on the evidence of the phaenomena. He aſſumes the laſt without any poſſible evidence from them, nay with a ſtrong preſumption derived from them againſt him. Whilſt we are alive we preſerve the capacity of thinking, I ſhould rather call it the faculty; juſt as we preſerve the faculty of moving and other faculties plainly corporeal, ſubject alike to many impediments and many infirmities of the body in which the faculty of thinking has the largeſt ſhare, as it might be ſhewn in various inſtances, in that of madneſs particularly. When we are dead, all theſe faculties are dead with us: and the ſole difference that we make in our judgments of the one and the other ariſes from hence, that we imagine the capacity or faculty of thinking to belong to a ſubſtance diſtinct from the body, concerning which the phaenomena can ſhew us nothing after death; and concerning which by conſequence metaphyſicians and divines think themſelves at liberty to ſay whatever they pleaſe. You would ſmile, if you heard any one ſay, that the man who has preſerved the fa-

ontoſophiſts have fixed the eſſence of matter. It can be no other than it is repreſented in our abſtract ideas, thoſe eternal natures

culty of walking, after having loſt and recovered frequently the uſe of his legs, will for this reaſon walk eternally. But you hearken very gravely when you hear another ſay, on as little knowledge, that he will think eternally; becauſe he has preſerved the capacity of thinking, after loſing it in the whole or in part on ſo many occaſions.

How much ſoever we may deem the thinking and unthinking ſubſtance to be diſtinct in nature, ſtill it will be true that theſe aſſumed ſouls were given to inform bodies, and thereby complete the human ſyſtem. The ſyſtem would be too imperfect to anſwer any conceivable purpoſe of making it, if either of them was wanting. Without thinking, the body would be unable to begin motion, and to perform many neceſſary corporeal operations. Without a body, the ſoul would be unable to acquire the firſt elements of knowledge, the materials of thought. In ſhort, neither of them could exiſt, and act in a ſtate of total ſeparation from the other. Wollaston was ſo ſenſible of this, that he ſuppoſes it, and in order to maintain that the ſoul does not ceaſe to exiſt when the body does, notwithſtanding this admiſſion, he retails to his readers an old trite chimera of the Platonic philoſophy, which has been mentioned above. He aſſumes, that the ſoul has another body beſides this which periſhes. "Some fine vehicle that dwells with it in the "brain, and goes off with it at death." This innermoſt body, which may be compared to the ſhirt of the ſoul, receives impreſſions from the outward body, which may be compared to it's great coat: and as thoſe impreſſions of ſenſible objects are communicated to the ſhirt, ſo the ſhirt communicates them to the ſoul, who ſits enveloped in it in the brain. On the other ſide reciprocally, the ſoul being thus put into motion produces motion in the "contiguous ſpirits and nerves "by moving it's own vehicle, and ſo moves the body." When the great coat is worn out, or deſtroyed by any accident, the ſoul flies in it's ſhirt away into the open fields of heaven, and thus undreſſed as it were, the impreſſions that were made mediately by the nerves are made immediately on it: thus it becomes, "as "it were, all eye to viſible objects, and all ear to audible, and ſo on."

I might have explained this hypotheſis further, with Mr. Wollaston's help, but my patience would not ſerve me; tho he thinks it contains nothing impoſſible, and therefore nothing but what may be. Many things are, he ſays very truly, by ways which we do not, nor can underſtand. But then this plea is not to be admitted in every caſe alike; for if it was, it would go a great way to ſcreen the falſe theories which philoſophers are apt to frame both in phyſics and metaphyſics. A primum mobile, an element of fire, were names invented to ſignify things which have no exiſtence; and ſuch was the word ſoul, perhaps, in philoſophical conſideration, if we take it not for a faculty ſuperadded to the human corporeal ſyſtem, but for a diſtinct ſubſtance united to it, and cooperating with it. But metaphyſical

natures independent of God himſelf. If you ſuppoſe it modified or mixed in any ſyſtem, ſo as to be no longer inert and ſenſeleſs, it is no longer conformable to our ideas: it is therefore no longer matter, ſuch as it came out of the region of poſſibility into that of actuality; it is another ſubſtance, and muſt be called by another name. God cannot make our ideas of incogitativity to be ideas of thinking, nor our ideas of neceſſity to be ideas of acting freely. To ſuch reaſoners it would be, I think, ſufficient to ſay; learn that human knowledge is derived from exiſtence: and that to be real, it muſt be conformable to things as they exiſt. Conform your ideas, therefore, to them, and pretend no longer to controul or to determine particular exiſtence by abſtract notions. As long as matter is ſenſeleſs and inert, it is not a thinking ſubſtance, nor ought to be called ſo. But when, in any ſyſtem of it, the eſſential

metaphyſical figments impoſe longer than phyſical; becauſe there is more room for WOLLASTON's plea, and becauſe hypotheſes may be heaped on hypotheſes with leſs controul in one, than in the other.

I MIGHT add, that this figment of a ſoul, if it be a figment, received ſtrength from the ſuperſtitious theology of the heathens. Nothing can confirm and conſecrate notions, however erroneous, ſo much: and this philoſophical notion was incorporated into theology from the firſt. Legiſlators and magiſtrates, poets and prieſts, as well as philoſophers, enforced it with all their authority: and the event has been a proof of this great truth, that "the underſtanding is as ſubject to the "impreſſions of fancy, as to thoſe of vulgar notions *."

I MIGHT obſerve further how little it became WOLLASTON, who would not believe that thinking is a faculty added by the Creator to certain ſyſtems of matter; becauſe he could not reconcile this opinion to his idea of matter, tho this opinion is conformable to all the phaenomena of the mind; how little, I ſay, it became him, and muſt become any other man who reaſons in the ſame way, to urge in defence of all his hypotheſes and paradoxes, that many things are by ways which we cannot underſtand,

BUT I will detain you no longer about ſuch diſcourſe as would convince you, if you heard it at MONROE's, that the philoſopher who held it was a patient of the doctor, not yet perfectly reſtored to his ſenſes.

* BACON.

eſſential properties, extenſion, ſolidity, &c. are maintained, that ſyſtem is material ſtill, though it become a ſenſitive plant, a reaſoning elephant, or a refining metaphyſician. It would be nonſenſe to aſſert, what no man does aſſert, that the idea of incogitativity can be the idea of thinking; but it is nonſenſe, and ſomething worſe than nonſenſe, to aſſert what you aſſert, that God cannot give the faculty of thinking, a faculty in the principle of it entirely unknown to you, to ſyſtems of matter whoſe eſſential properties are ſolidity, extenſion, &c. not incogitativity. This term of negation can be no more the eſſence of matter than that other immateriality can be the eſſence of ſpirit. Our ideas of ſolidity and extenſion do not include the idea of thought, neither do they include that of motion; but they exclude neither: and the arguments you draw from the diviſibility of matter againſt it's cogitability, which you deny, might be not ill employed againſt it's mobility which you admit, as I ſuppoſe.

SECT. IX.

It has been ſaid, that this boaſted ſcience about ſoul or ſpirit has not the merit even of a good hypotheſis, tho it pretends to be demonſtrated. You may perhaps begin to think ſo. But in order to be the more convinced of this, it may not be time miſpent to reflect, before we leave the ſubject, on the ſole means we have of acquiring any knowledge of this kind, and to conſider how far theſe means can carry us in the enquiry.

That all our knowledge of corporeal ſubſtance muſt be founded in the experience we have of our own, and in the experiments and obſervations we are able to make on other bodies,

dies, will not be denied in the preſent ſtate of philoſophy. As little can it be denied, that all our knowledge of ſoul or ſpirit muſt be founded, to be real, on what every man may know by intuition of his own ſoul or ſpirit; for we cannot contemplate other ſouls, as we can other bodies. Hypotheſes may be made about either, but they muſt be made in both caſes under the ſame reſtrictions. When they are deſigned only to amuſe the mind with a ſort of analogical appearance of probability, and pretend to be nothing more than phyſical and metaphyſical romances, they are ſurely very innocent, and employ our time better at leaſt than moſt of our other amuſements do: and yet even then they muſt contain nothing that is abſolutely repugnant to the phaenomena. But when they take a more ſerious air, when they pretend to be founded in ſome knowledge and to lead to more; and, above all, when they pretend to be not ſo much hypotheſes, as demonſtrated ſyſtems; it is not enough that they be barely reconcileable to the phaenomena. The phaenomena muſt confirm them; or they muſt be rejected, on what authority ſoever they come recommended. Authority has been extended very far in theology and philoſophy from the time when theſe names were firſt aſſumed, and perhaps long before. PLATO having ſpoke in that Pythagorical rhapſody, the Timaeus, about the viſible gods, the gods made to be ſeen, "qui tales geniti ſunt ut cer-"nantur," that is, the celeſtial phaenomena, he proceeds to ſpeak of Daemons, that is, of inviſible ſpiritual natures: but of theſe he confeſſes himſelf unable to ſpeak on the ſtrength of his parts, or on his own knowledge; for which reaſon he has recourſe to tradition, and to the authority of the antients, who were born of gods, and knew their parents extremely well. "Priſcis itaque viris in hac re credendum eſt, qui diis geniti "parentes ſuos optimè noverint." Theſe men we muſt believe, he ſays, tho the things they have delivered down be not

not confirmed by concluſive nor even by probable reaſons. " Licet nec neceſſariis nec veriſimilibus rationibus eorum ora- " tio confirmetur." On ſuch reſpectable authority did the divine PLATO vend, to his own and to future ages, all the myſterious nonſenſe that PYTHAGORAS and he had imported from the Egyptian and Eaſtern ſchools of theology and philoſophy. But if this might be borne in a theology that pretends to be revealed, and ought to be ſubmitted to in one that proves itſelf to be ſo, it is intolerable in philoſophy; for in all the parts of that, in the very firſt, in natural theology, human reaſon, that is common ſenſe, is the ſole judge; and the greateſt doctor has no more right to impoſe his authority on me, than I have to impoſe mine on him. I do this juſtice therefore to PLATO; I do not believe he was in earneſt, when he ſet the example: tho I believe that many great divines and metaphyſicians have been in earneſt, when they have followed it.

IF men had conſulted the phaenomena of their own minds alone, which can alone afford us any means of acquiring knowledge of ſpirit or thinking ſubſtance, inſtead of hearkening to ſuch idle traditions, and raiſing chimaeras of their own upon thoſe of other men; if they had proceeded in the analytic method from particulars to generals, as far and no farther than the former juſtified the latter; it ſeems to me that they could ſcarce have imagined the ſubſtance of ſoul abſolutely diſtinct from that of body; nor have created an habitual reverence for an opinion ſo ill founded in appearances. They have purſued another method, which has brought them, after two or three thouſand years, to this paradoxical dilemma; they muſt either maintain the hypotheſis of two diſtinct ſubſtances, and explain in ſome tolerable manner, which they have not yet done, the union and mutual action on one an-

other of unextended and extended beings; or they muſt deny the abſolute exiſtence of any thing extrinſical to the mind, and maintain that God did nothing more, when he created the world, than give a relative exiſtence to things; that is, make objects perceptible to his creatures which had exiſted eternally in the divine, and acquired then a new exiſtence in the human mind, but had no other; that he created finite ſpirits, in ſhort nothing elſe, ſpirits to perceive, but nothing to be perceived, except his eternal ideas; that there is no material world, but that the intellectual world is made perceivable by us, according to an order that God has eſtabliſhed. Was I obliged by the terrors of an inquiſition to embrace one of theſe two hypotheſes, I confeſs freely that I would embrace the laſt, ſtrange as it is, as the leaſt inconceivable in itſelf, and the moſt convenient in it's conſequences. But the method taken to frame them revolts me againſt both.

THIS method we find recommended very emphatically in ſeveral places, and on ſeveral occaſions, in the works of PLATO: and I chuſe to give it you, or at leaſt ſome general notion of it, according to the expoſition of MARSILIUS FICINUS*, his beſt interpreter and commentator. Firſt then, of bodies there are ſeveral ſorts, aethereal, that is, celeſtial; aereal, ſuch as ghoſts wear; and terreſtrial, ſuch as we wear during our lives. We cannot have experimental knowledge of the two former; and experiment and obſervation are not proper means of arriving at knowledge even of the latter. Corporeal objects dim the ſight of the ſoul: to know them we muſt look off from them, and muſt not expect to diſcover any truth concerning them, unleſs we have recourſe to the ideas of things. "Niſi ad ideas confugiamus." Of ſouls in the next place, it is extremely hard to know the ſubſtance

* MARSIL. FIC. argum. Phae. & alibi.

ſtance in this life, becauſe we perceive it "ſub corporeâ ſpecie," under a corporeal appearance, and are apt to think in a corporeal manner. The ſureſt way therefore to comprehend it, is to proceed by moral purgation, and metaphyſical abſtraction. "Ideoque tutiſſimam rationem ad animam comprehen-" dendam eſſe tum moralem purgationem tum metaphyſi-" cam abſtractionem." And if all this will not do, ſome revelation is neceſſary, "opus eſt divino quodam verbo." One would think however, that it ſhould do; ſince by intenſeneſs of meditation a philoſopher may abſtract himſelf from his ſenſes and his imagination, according to PLATO, and employ his mind wholly about incorporeal natures and ideas to which it becomes united by this abſtraction; and ſince in this ſtate he alone has wiſdom and knowledge, tho being as it were out of himſelf, "extra ſe poſitus," he is laughed at by the vulgar as a madman. You ſmile perhaps; but reflect a little on the ſyſtems (ſo we will call them civilly for once) of ſome modern philoſophers about body as well as ſpirit, on their method of reaſoning and on the dogmatical language they hold upon ſubjects the moſt remote from human apprehenſion; and you will not think that I do them any wrong in comparing their manner of philoſophiſing with that of the founder of the academy, his myſterious maſters the Egyptians, or his enthuſiaſtical ſcholars the latter Platoniſts. Let us then leave thoſe, who think themſelves able to arrive at ſuperior knowledge by ſome ſuch methods as theſe, to be happy in their own imaginations, and let us rather pity than blame them, when they treat our real tho imperfect knowledge as a chimaera, and the chimaeras of their own brains as real knowledge. But then let theſe purged, theſe purified, theſe illuminated ſpirits, who have a conſtant communication by ideas with the ſupreme ſpirit, allow us, who have none of theſe advantages, nor any conception that they have them, to

purſue quietly the acquiſition of a little human knowledge by human means.

We have clear and determinate ideas of what we call body by ſenſation, and of what we call ſpirit by reflection: or to avoid cavil as much as may be, without giving up common ſenſe, we have ſuch ideas by ſenſation as the various powers of that ſubſtance, called body, are ordained to produce in us, and we have ſuch ideas by reflection as the inward operations of that which we call ſpirit, be it ſubſtance or faculty, excite in us. We are able to contemplate theſe ideas naked, if I may ſay ſo, and ſtripped of the dreſs of words. How far then does the contemplation of theſe ideas carry us towards knowledge, or how high do we riſe by it in the ſcale of probability? That is the only queſtion which a reaſonable man, who is content to know, as God has made him capable of knowing, will aſk. The anſwer muſt be to this effect. Philoſophers talk of matter and ſpirit, as if they had a thorough acquaintance with both, when in truth they know nothing of either beyond a few phaenomena inſufficient to frame any hypotheſis. The atomical ſyſtem, which Leucippus took perhaps from other philoſophers, which Democritus took from Leucippus to improve it, and which Epicurus took from Democritus to corrupt it, has been revived with great reaſon. But yet we muſt not talk of matter as if we knew it in theſe firſt elements or principles of it, and abſtractedly from all the forms under which we perceive it. Theſe original particles, in which the nature of it conſiſts, and on which the conſtitution of it under all it's forms depends, are far beyond the reach of any analyſe we can make, of any knowledge we can acquire. Whether theſe particles be uniform and homogeneous, or whether they be of different kinds, different even in ſubſtance as well as in ſize, figure, and other circumſtances

or

or accidents, is as much unknown to the proudeſt dogmatiſt, as to you or to me. Nay, whether many of theſe original particles may not be endued with active principles, ſuch, for inſtance, as cauſe fermentation in ſome and coheſion in all bodies, is a point that none of them can determine: and yet one need not ſcruple to ſay, that the affirmative may be aſſumed on better grounds than their hypotheſes are, notwithſtanding the repeated din of inert, ſenſeleſs, ſtupid, paſſive, and ſimilar epithets, which they ring in our ears whenever they ſpeak of body or matter. Their whole diſcourſe, when they go beyond a few apparent properties, whereof we are fitted to have ideas, and which have been already diſcovered, is one continued petition of principle, and grows as nauſeous tho not ſo mortal as the crambe of JUVENAL.

BODY or matter is compounded and wrought into various ſyſtems before it becomes ſenſible to us. We behold ſome that are indeed inert, ſenſeleſs, ſtupid and in appearance merely paſſive. But we behold others that have vegetative life, juices and ſpirits that circulate and ferment in them, by which they are nouriſhed and by which they grow. They have not the power of beginning motion, but motion which is renewed in them after it has entirely ceaſed, and both by cauſes as material as themſelves, continues in them, and they live, and move, and propagate their ſpecies; till their frame is diſſolved by age or ſickneſs, or ſome external violence. We behold others again that have animal life, and that go from reſt to motion and from motion to reſt, independently of any outward cauſe that determines ſuch effects by a phyſical neceſſity in this caſe, as we obſerve to be done in the former. We diſcover, by the help of microſcopes, an immenſe variety of theſe animal ſyſtems. Where they begin, God alone their Creator and ours can tell: and it would be

be as impertinent to aſk this queſtion, as it is to demand what " the degree of fineneſs, or the alteration in the ſituation of it's " parts, is, at which matter may begin to find itſelf alive and " cogitative *?" They who defend ſo ill their own hypotheſes would do well to be leſs dogmatical and ſupercilious when they attack thoſe that ſeem probable to other men. Whereever theſe animal ſyſtems begin, their beginning and the principles of their compoſition are alike unknown. All we know is that they are, and all we ſuppoſe is that they are material beings to which no Carteſian nor any philoſopher, who does not deny the exiſtence of body, will, I preſume, object.

As theſe animal ſyſtems come to be more and more ſenſible to us, and as our means and opportunities of obſerving them encreaſe, we diſcover in them, and according to their different ſpecies, or even among individuals of the ſame ſpecies, in ſome more, in others fewer, of the ſame appearances, that denote a power of thinking in us from the loweſt conceivable degrees of it, up to ſuch as are not far, if at all remote, from thoſe in which ſome men enjoy it. I ſay ſome men, becauſe I think it indiſputable that the diſtance between the intellectual faculties of different men is often greater than that between the ſame faculties in ſome men and ſome other animals.

If now we are to form a general concluſion from all theſe concurrent phaenomena, without any further reaſoning about them than ſuch as they juſtify, what muſt it be? It muſt be plainly this, that there is in the whole animal kind one intellectual ſpring common to every ſpecies, but vaſtly diſtinguiſhed in it's effects; that tho it appears to be the ſame ſpring in all, yet it ſeems to be differently tempered, and to have more

* Rel. of nat. delin. §. 9.

elaſticity and force in ſome and leſs in others; and that beſides this, the apparent difference in the conſtitutions and organizations of animals, ſeems to account for the different determinations of it's motion, and the ſurpriſing variety of it's effects. If the plain man who has formed theſe general concluſions, on particular obſervations and experiments, ſhould be aſked the trite queſtion, whether he conceives that matter, however figured or moved, ſubtilized or fermented, can be pleaſure or pain, deſire or averſion? To anſwer truly, I think, he muſt anſwer that he cannot conceive matter to be any of theſe, nor even how a ſyſtem of matter becomes capable of having any ideas, affections or paſſions, any more than he can conceive how a multitude of other phaenomena can be as he perceives evidently that they are. But that he has puſhed his enquiry as far as the true means of enquiry are open, that is, as far as the phaenomena can guide him; that he cannot draw any other concluſion from them than this, that all animal ſyſtems are material; and that he muſt content himſelf with this, unleſs ſome other can be drawn from the ſame phaenomena.

The philoſopher is not ſo content. If phyſics will not ſerve his purpoſe, metaphyſics and theology ſhall. "Ad ideas "confugiendum eſt;" and ſince the particular phaenomena of the whole animal ſyſtem lead to a concluſion he diſlikes, he reſolves not to be determined by them, but to reaſon, without regard to them, from his own abſtract ideas; and from theſe he draws a concluſion as inconceivable as that which he rejects. The plain man owns himſelf unable to explain how material ſyſtems think, tho their phaenomena are ſo many poſitive proofs that oblige him to conclude they have this power. The philoſopher decides negatively on ſuch proofs as his abſtract ideas of matter furniſh to him, that no ſyſtem of matter thinks, that omnipotence cannot any way

way communicate to it the faculty of thinking, and poſitively that whatever thinks is a ſimple being, immaterial, indiſſoluble, and therefore immortal. The plain man has recourſe once more to the phaenomena, and objects that we muſt be reduced, if we receive this hypotheſis, to aſſert that other animals beſides men have immaterial and immortal ſouls; or, that no other animal, beſides man, has the faculty of thinking. The immaterialiſt is far from contending for the firſt: and the materialiſt cannot admit the latter, in oppoſition to the phaenomena; in oppoſition to which no hypotheſis is admiſſible.

THERE ſeem to be but three ways to get rid of this objection. Each of them has been tried, and each of them is a different hypotheſis. By one, this knot and a multitude of others are cut aſunder very eaſily; for it conſiſts in aſſerting roundly that there is no ſuch thing as material ſyſtems, nor matter, nor any exiſtence out of mind eternal or created, as we have mentioned already. All obſervations of the phaenomena which ſuppoſe ſuch an exiſtence, are therefore deceptions according to this ſcheme: and it would be ridiculous to attempt proving that other animals, beſides men, think, to one who denies that theſe animals exiſt, or even that he and the man who ſhould diſpute with him exiſt, in the ſenſe in which exiſtence is univerſally underſtood.

AS theſe philoſophers take body from men, there are others who not only take thought from the reſt of the animal kind, but reduce them to the ſtate of automates or machines. Whether DES CARTES advanced this paradox in good earneſt, and really doubted whether other animals had a power of thinking or not, it is impoſſible to determine. That he ſhould be in earneſt it is hard to conceive; ſince any reaſons of doubt

which he might have in this caſe would have been reaſons of doubt in the caſe of other men, who may give more, but cannot give more evident ſigns of thought than their fellow-creatures. But we may perſuade ourſelves very eaſily, that MALEBRANCHE maintained the ſame paradox in very good earneſt; ſince it has a nearer and a more favorable relation to his own whimſies, and to ſome theological tenets, than is commonly obſerved. Thus the ſame thing which happens to liars happens often to men who ſeek the truth very ſincerely; but imagine too lightly that they have found it when they have only made an hypotheſis, and that they know things as they are when they only gueſs how they may be. One hypotheſis wants another to ſupport it, that a third, and ſo on, till philoſophy grows to be what it has always been, an aggregate of motley ſyſtems, partly real and partly fantaſtical.

THESE two paradoxes have not maintained much credit in the world. Men continue to be perſuaded that there are mountains and rivers, and trees and animals: and I apprehend that this vulgar notion will continue to prevail. Juſt ſo they believe ſtill that there is ſome difference between the pariſh clock and the town bull; that the ſhepherd's dog perceives and wills, as really as the ſhepherd himſelf; and that the philoſopher's horſe knows the way to his ſtable, as well as the philoſopher knows the way to his ſtudy. They will not be ſufficient, therefore, to remove the plain man's objection, and recourſe muſt be had to the third hypotheſis which compounds matters a little, and is a little more plauſible in appearance, but in reality leſs defenſible than that of DES CARTES: one ſtands in direct oppoſition to the phaenomena, but the other contradicts itſelf. The hypotheſis I mean, is that which aſſumes a rational ſoul in man alone, and a ſenſitive ſoul alone in all other animals.

He who ſhould have read all that has been written on this ſubject, from Aristotle down to the author of the praeeſtabliſhed harmony, and who ſhould have meditated ever ſo long on theſe writings, would find it a very hard taſk to give a full, and an impracticable one to give an intelligible account of what he had found there; ſo confuſed, ſo obſcure is this labyrinth of hypotheſes. I ſhall not ſet my foot far into it; for philoſophers, according to their uſual practice, have reaſoned and diſputed in this caſe to no other purpoſe than to render diffuſe and intricate what lies in the narroweſt compaſs, and has really no difficulty in it, if we know where to ſtop.

In order to avoid that paradox, which ſome at leaſt of the Stoicians held, and which Gomez Pereyra and Des Cartes renewed in the ſixteenth and ſeventeenth centuries; and to maintain at the ſame time the ſuperiority of the human nature, not only in degree but in kind too, this notion of a ſenſitive ſoul has been advanced, or rather continued and enforced; for it deſcends to us from the ſame ſprings from which ſo many other abſurdities have flowed. The diſtinction between ſouls and images of ſouls, "animae et animarum ſimulacra," might lead to it. But there are other paſſages in Plato that favor it more directly. Aristotle ſpoke leſs figuratively and more clearly on the ſubject, for he beſtowed ſenſation, memory, and the paſſions on other animals, and reaſon on man excluſively. On this principle the ſchoolmen and all the peripateticians have proceeded, and it is at this hour the reigning opinion among ſound divines. There cannot be however a more unſound doctrine, if extreme abſurdity can render it ſo; for either they who maintain it ſuppoſe the ſenſitive ſoul to be a middle being between body and ſpirit, or they do not. If they ſuppoſe it ſo, they ſuppoſe it to be neither extended

extended nor unextended, neither material nor immaterial, and we have no idea of any other ſubſtance. If they do not ſuppoſe it to be ſo, they affirm, without knowing it, what they mean to deny; for they muſt admit (unleſs philoſophers have a right to contradict the inward as well as the outward phaenomena, and intuitive as well as ſenſitive knowledge) that the power of thinking, that very power whereof we are conſcious, is as neceſſary to the perception of the ſlighteſt ſenſation as it is to geometrical reaſoning. There is no conceivable difference in the faculty or power: the ſole difference ariſes from the degree in which it is, or can be exerted. It has been aſked, will you deny the power of God to create a ſubſtance capable of ſenſation only, and not of reaſon? No man living has higher notions of the divine omnipotence, nor carries them further than I do. An argument fairly drawn from the power of God will determine me at any time and on any occaſion; tho it does not determine theſe men who inſiſt ſo much upon it, when they hope to make it ſerve their purpoſe by an unfair application of it. I am perſuaded that God can make material ſyſtems capable of thought, not only becauſe I muſt renounce one of the kinds of knowledge that he has given me, and the firſt tho not the principal in the order of knowing, or admit that he has done ſo: but becauſe the original principles and many of the properties of matter being alike unknown to me, he has not ſhewn me that it implies any contradiction to aſſert a material thinking ſubſtance. This now, which implies no contradiction, except it be with their precarious hypothetical ideas, theſe great aſſerters of the divine power deny. But at the ſame time they draw another argument unfairly from this very power, by aſſigning it as the cauſe of an effect which does manifeſtly imply contradiction. It implies contradiction manifeſtly, to ſay that a ſubſtance capable of thought by it's nature, in one degree or inſtance, is by it's nature incapable of it in another.

God may limit the exercise of this power, no doubt, in his creatures variously, according to their different organizations, or to the imperceptible differences that there may be in the atoms that compose their bodies, or by other causes absolutely inconceivable. This happens to other animals: it happens to men, and the largest understanding is limited in the exercise of it's mental faculties. But a nature capable of sensation, that is of perception, that is of thought (to say nothing of spontaneous motion, of memory, nor of the passions) cannot be incapable of another mode of thinking, any more than finite extension can be capable of one figure alone, or a piece of wax that receives the impression of one seal cannot receive that of another.

We may apply very justly to those who have maintained the doctrine of sensitive and rational souls, and to those who have made new hypotheses concerning them, as well as concerning the apparent reciprocal action of body and mind, what Bacon says of the Greek philosophers, "impetu tan-" tum intellectûs usi sunt, regulam non adhibuerunt; sed " omnia in meditatione acri et mentis volutatione et agitatione " perpetuâ posuerunt." It must be confessed that some of the moderns have been guilty of this as well as the antients, and, I think, with less excuse; because experimental philosophy has been more in use, and the means of acquiring knowledge of this kind have been more common in our days. Notwithstanding this, we have seen men of the greatest name neglect sometimes entirely, at their first setting out to enquire into the nature of things spiritual or corporeal, an exact and sufficient observation of the phaenomena; and still oftener, contenting themselves with a transient view of particulars, hurry on to general knowledge according to the natural propensity of the human mind, without having this rule, if I may

may ſay ſo, in their hands; or elſe bending it to their abſtract notions, inſtead of ſquaring theſe ſcrupulouſly by it. It ſeems that the great author himſelf, whoſe cenſure I have juſt quoted, does ſomething of this kind in his fourth book of the augmentation of ſcience, where he makes a diſtinction between rational and ſenſitive ſouls. The latter he affirms to be a material ſubſtance, "planè ſubſtantia corporea cen-" ſenda eſt," without perceiving that this cannot be, unleſs matter can be made capable of thinking. This ſoul he aſſigns to brutes, according to the received notion. According to the ſame, he ſuppoſes the rational to be a ſuperior ſoul in men, without perceiving that the ſuppoſition of theſe two ſouls is as abſurd, as that of an upper and lower part in the ſame ſimple and indiviſible being. He concludes by hinting that the ſenſitive ſoul in man may be conſidered as confounded with and loſt in the rational, "ipſa anima rationalis et ſpiri-" tus potius appellatione quam animae indigitari poſſit," without perceiving that we may juſt as well confound the rational with the ſenſitive, as the ſenſitive with the rational ſoul, and that if nothing can think which is material, that which thinks in other animals muſt be immaterial; or if any thing can think which is material, that there is no pretence to conclude that which thinks in man to be immaterial. I am afraid, therefore, that the inquiſition which he recommends in this place, and which ſeemed to him to be almoſt wanting, "quaſi deſiderari videtur," muſt have been purſued on his principles under the influence, not of one, but of all the four kinds of falſe ideas and notions the "idola tribûs, ſpecûs, " fori, et theatri," which he has named, not without ſome of the affectation prevalent in his age; and which muſt in all ages, render it hard for truth to enter into the mind, and be apt to diſturb the progreſs of it when it is there.

This hypotheſis, and the others of freſher invention, are like the armed men of Cadmus; they kill one another: not one ſurvives the reſt. Affectation of ſuperior genius and knowledge has decoyed men, no doubt, into theſe ſcenes of fantaſtical ideas and notions: but it muſt be confeſſed, that they have been forced into them likewiſe, in ſome degree, both by intereſt, another intereſt than that of truth, and by invincible prejudice. There are certain opinions fixed by authority; an authority that deſerved no reſpect in it's original, and that could never have impoſed by itſelf, but one that cuſtom renders ſacred, and that acquires by ſubſequent authorities, and by circumſtances foreign to it, an importance, in the whole, or in part, which nothing elſe could have communicated to it. My lord Bacon himſelf obſerves to this purpoſe, and he might have applied the obſervation to himſelf on this and other occaſions, that the greateſt genii have ſuffered violence in all ages; whilſt out of regard to their own characters they have ſubmitted to the judgment of their age, and of the populace: ſo that time, like a river, has brought down light and tumid error, whilſt ſolid and weighty truth is ſunk to the bottom and is dived for by few. Thus the notions that prevail about ſoul, ſpiritual ſubſtance and ſpiritual operations and things, took their riſe in ſchools where ſuch doctrines were taught as men would be ſent to Bedlam for teaching at this day. Their inward doctrine, for they had two, might be more reaſonable, perhaps, but we cannot wonder if that which was taught to a few, and which the few kept ſecret, was ſoon loſt; whilſt the outward doctrine, which was taught to whole nations, and glared with ſymbols, allegories and parables, or philoſophical fables, was preſerved. Some of theſe doctrines are come down to us: and it is probable that they have loſt nothing of their primitive extravagance in the

the writings of PLATO, through which they have been conveyed principally; ſince there never was a more wild or leſs conſiſtent author in proſe or verſe.

IN the confuſion of fantaſtical ideas and notions which the introduction of the Platonic philoſophy into chriſtianity occaſioned or increaſed, as I ſhall ſhew at large hereafter and on more occaſions than one, that of a material ſoul ſeems to have prevailed at firſt; at leaſt it is certain that the moſt zealous writers for chriſtianity maintained it, or ſuppoſed it. The notion, however, of it's immateriality, was ſoon and more generally eſtabliſhed. PLATO, their great maſter in metaphyſical pneumatics, gave them in his vague and figurative manner of writing ſufficient foundation for either of theſe opinions: and the laſt ſeemed the moſt favorable to that of the immortality of the ſoul. From that time to this, whoever attacks one is ſuppoſed to attack the other, and is clamored againſt, accordingly, by every one who affects a ſtrict orthodoxy, without obſerving, or perhaps tho he does obſerve, that the opinion of the ſoul's immateriality adds no ſtrength to that of it's immortality; nay, that by reſting it too much on the former, they weaken the latter, and build on a principle which they can never make intelligible, when they might aſſume another very intelligible and quite ſufficient for their purpoſe. Now theſe opinions being thus united, their union being confirmed, by the authority of the whole chriſtian church, and the belief of it inculcated by the proceſs of education, the ideas of immateriality and immortality become ſo intimately aſſociated in the minds of men, that many can no longer ſeparate them when they commence philoſophers; and that thoſe, who ſee that if immateriality may be ſaid to imply immortality, it will not follow that immortality, in this caſe, implies neceſſarily immateriality, chuſe rather to keep terms with error than paſs

for heterodox. Thus prejudice and intereſt conſpire to put philoſophers under a neceſſity of maintaining that the ſoul is an immaterial being, and, in order to maintain it, of inventing the moſt extravagant hypotheſes. When they have once agreed that twice two make five, they may well aſſert that twice four make ten.

The plain man, a much better philoſopher in the true ſenſe of the word, keeps out of this confuſion; for he puſhes his enquiries no further than the phaenomena lead him, nor preſumes to affirm any propoſition which is not ſuggeſted and confirmed by them. They do not lead him far in his enquiries about ſpirit, but they lead him ſurely. Corporeal nature affords men a fund of knowledge, ſuch as it is, which they can never exhauſt. We acquire our firſt ideas from thence, and by induſtry and experiment it is in our power to acquire more and to improve this kind of knowledge daily. How much it is ſo appears in the vaſt improvements that have been made ſince experimental philoſophy has been cultivated. The plain man will be apt to aſk why a proportionable improvement has not been made in that knowledge which is called metaphyſical? And I think he will give himſelf this plain anſwer, that men have in one caſe means in their power that are proportioned to their ends in ſome degree, and that they have them not in the other in any degree, tho they proceed fantaſtically as if they had. That there are corporeal natures we have ſenſitive knowledge. That there are ſpiritual natures, diſtinct from all theſe, we have no knowledge at all. We only infer that there are ſuch, becauſe we know that we think, and are not able to conceive how material ſyſtems can think. We are conſcious of certain modes of thinking, of certain faculties and operations of what we call mind, and of certain inward emotions which we aſcribe to the mind

and which we call affections and paſſions. This is ſome degree of knowledge, no doubt, and it might be improved to conduct better our underſtandings and our lives too. But then the principles of it, the mental phaenomena, are few; and, beyond thoſe that are obvious to immediate reflection, there are none to be diſcovered. There are neither microſcopes nor teleſcopes to aſſiſt our inward ſight, and neither geometry nor algebra can be of any real uſe in this part of natural philoſophy: whereas, in the other, the vaſt ſcene of corporeal nature, which will never be quite opened, is always opening to human induſtry. We diſcover frequently new phaenomena, or we correct and improve our former obſervations: and every ſtep of this kind is an advancement of ſcience. Theſe reflections may ſerve to explain how it has come to paſs that philoſophers have made ſuch a mighty progreſs in the knowledge of corporeal nature, even within little more than a century; whereas their knowledge of ſpiritual nature is no greater now than it was three thouſand years ago, and than it will be three thouſand years hence, if the generations of men continue ſo long.

Men were conſcious, ever ſince their race exiſted, that there is an active thinking principle in their compoſition: and the firſt reflection they made, as ſoon as they began to reflect on what paſſes within them, could not fail to be this, that there is a mutual influence of body on mind which ſhews itſelf firſt, and of mind on body which appears a little later. With this knowledge men of common ſenſe have contented themſelves in all ages; whilſt philoſophers, thoſe men of uncommon ſenſe, have filled their own heads and the heads of all who have hearkened to them, in every age, with fantaſtical ideas and notions, on which they have erected hypotheſes repugnant to one another as well as to the phaenomena.

It would be aſtoniſhing, if it was not ſo common, to ſee men advance hypotheſes ſometimes with no regard, and often with very little, to thoſe phaenomena whereof we are able to acquire ſenſitive knowledge alone: but that they ſhould do the ſame thing in caſes, where every man has the ſame intuitive knowledge of the phaenomena, might be deemed impoſſible; and yet both are true. The diſtinction between ſenſitive and rational ſouls, and the immateriality of the latter, had been long eſtabliſhed: and the ſchoolmen, who ſpun their cobwebs of philoſophy as well as theology out of their own brains, had ſettled moſt accurately the bounds of each, when DES CARTES aroſe: a great genius ſurely. The French, a little like the Greeks, "qui ſua tantum mirantur," affect to ſpeak of him as if he had firſt diſpelled the miſts of antient philoſophy, and taught mankind both to enquire and to reaſon. But our VERULAM, as great a luminary as he, perhaps a greater, one more uſeful certainly in the advancement of knowledge, had appeared before him to diſpel theſe miſts and to put the clue of experiment into our hands; to deride contentious logic, and to diſtinguiſh, between fantaſtical and real, the knowledge men had, and the knowledge they wanted, in every branch of human ſcience. The Engliſh and the French ſun both had their ſpots: and if they diſpelled ſome miſts, they raiſed others. The great obligation we have to them is, that they ſet us in the way of diſcovering their errors, as they had diſcovered thoſe of other philoſophers.

DES CARTES ſaw what the ſchoolmen had not ſeen, that a ſenſitive ſoul capable of all the functions and endued with all the faculties that they or their maſter ARISTOTLE allowed to belong to it, muſt be capable of thinking by it's nature, and therefore in every reſpect as well as theſe; and that all their diſtinctions were without differences, and mere arbitrary ſup-

ſuppoſitions. If he had ſtopped here, he had defeated them and not expoſed himſelf to be defeated in his turn. But it did not become the majeſty of his philoſophy to leave any thing unaccounted for, how deeply ſoever hid, to ſpeak like PLINY, in the majeſty of nature. He therefore aſſumed two ſubſtances, the extended and the thinking ſubſtance. But as ſoon as he had done ſo, two difficulties preſented themſelves; one ariſing from the preciſe definition he had given of the ſoul, more obviouſly at leaſt, if not more ſtrongly, than from the vague notions of the peripateticians; and the other concerning the mutual action of mind on body, and of body on mind, ariſing as obviouſly and as ſtrongly from his as from the common hypotheſis, which were in effect, as to the rational ſoul, the ſame. DES CARTES, therefore, thought fit to make two other aſſumptions; one, that ſince beaſts muſt either not think at all, or have ſouls like men, whoſe eſſence is thought, they ſhould have no ſouls at all, but be reduced to be material automates. Such he made them: and ſuch they continue among his diſciples, as far as it is neceſſary they ſhould be ſuch to make his ſyſtem conſiſtent with that of chriſtian divines. It is, in truth, more favorable to them than their own; for beſides other abſurdities that attend the notion of a ſenſitive ſoul, the perpetual creation and annihilation of ſo many ſouls, as all the animals and inſects of the world require, was a conſequence that formed an objection the more againſt the notion. DES CARTES ſweeped all theſe ſouls away at once, and the objection with them. The other aſſumption that this philoſopher made, by the plenitude of his power in hypotheſis, was this; that ſince he had eſtabliſhed an heterogeneity between the ſoul and the body, more abſolute than that which there ſeemed to be whilſt a ſenſitive ſoul was placed like a mid-

dle being between them, and ſince their mutual operations on one another became conſequently more inconceivable than ever, this reciprocal action ſhould be no longer admitted, however conſcious of it men might imagine themſelves to be. Volition, for inſtance, is made by this Carteſian hypotheſis the occaſional, not the efficient, cauſe of the motion of body: and the impreſſion of an outward object on our organs is made the occaſional, not the efficient, cauſe of the ſenſation that our minds perceive. God is the ſole efficient cauſe in all theſe caſes. He acts directly and immediately according to the laws on which he has eſtabliſhed this ſtrange union between ſoul and body. A ſtrange union it muſt needs be! and one would be tempted almoſt to think, that it is indifferent whether the ſoul reſides in the body it is ſuppoſed to inform, or any where elſe; ſince, united as they are, there is no immediate intercourſe between them, nor any other than that which is carried on mediately by the ſupreme Being, who is every where preſent, and may therefore be determined to act by a mind on a body, and by a body on a mind, how remote ſoever from one another. If we ſpeak with the vulgar, with whom it is more reaſonable to ſpeak and to think too, than with philoſophers, on ſome occaſions, we muſt ſay that the death of PYRRHUS was the effect of a tile falling caſually on his head. But if we ſpeak with the Carteſians; we muſt ſay that the paſſing of PYRRHUS before the old woman's window was the occaſion which determined God to make her ſee him; that on this ſecond occaſion, the ſight of him, God impreſſed a ſentiment of anger and vengeance on the old woman's ſoul; that on this third occaſion, the ſentiment of anger in the old woman's ſoul, God moved her arm to throw the tile; and that on this fourth occaſion, the falling of the tile, God broke the ſkull of this fighting king of EPIRUS. This extravagant hypotheſis would provoke laughter, if

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it did not provoke horror, as I think it muſt in the mind of every ſincere theiſt *.

THE makers of hypotheſes have not ſtopped here. LEIBNITZ aroſe after DES CARTES, and if the ſecond did not equal the firſt in real, he outdid him and every other philoſopher in fantaſtical knowledge. He rejected the old opinion, that the ſoul and body are ſo conſtituted and ſo united by God as to influence and to act really on one another. He rejected that of

* SINCE there are thoſe who dogmatize boldly about God's manner of being, and of knowing, it is no wonder that there ſhould be thoſe who dogmatize alſo about his manner of cauſing, and about the oeconomy of his providence in the government of the world. When they aſſume particular providences, the inſtances they bring are often ridiculous: when they ſpeak in general of occaſional cauſes, the inſtances of theſe, which force themſelves upon the mind, muſt needs raiſe horror in every man who believes a God. Theſe doctrines are impertinent in their origin, and abominable in their conſequences. If DES CARTES had not made, on his clear and diſtinct ideas, and his lively inward ſentiment, ſuch definitions as could not be reconciled to the univerſal experience of mankind, he would have been under no difficulty, except that of owning his ignorance, in a caſe wherein every other philoſopher was not leſs ignorant than he. But rather than not make a new hypotheſis without a ſufficient regard to the phaenomena firſt, and rather than not maintain it even againſt them afterwards, the ſupreme being was brought down, "ſicut Deus in machinâ," to deliver this puzzled philoſopher out of the perplexity wherein he had involved himſelf. I would not think of God at all, tho he ought to be always preſent to our thoughts; I would refuſe to acknowledge and adore him in the contemplation of his works, tho I do it from the bottom of my heart, much ſooner than I would look on him as the immediate efficient cauſe of every ſenſation of human minds and every action of human bodies. Shall I believe that it is God who impreſſes thoſe frantic ſentiments of devotion, which an Indian idolater feels on the ſight of his idol, and who determines the body of this wretch, on the occaſion of theſe ſentiments, to fall under the wheels of the proceſſional car, and be cruſhed to death? Shall I believe that it is God who moves the arm of a parricide when he plunges a dagger into his father's heart, or that of ſome low rogue when he picks a pocket? The conſequences are horrible: and an hypotheſis that ſhould lead to them, even leſs directly than this of DES CARTES does, would deſerve to be rejected with the utmoſt indignation. Many of the moſt extravagant opinions entertained by the Heathen were capable of being reconciled to an awful ſenſe of the monarchy of a ſupreme Being. Such opinions as theſe cannot be ſo: and Chriſtian philoſophers and divines have done more to debaſe our notions of this Being, than all the doctors of polytheiſm.

of the French philoſopher likewiſe, which has been juſt mentioned. He did not proſtitute the divine agency by making God the immediate efficient cauſe of every effect that body ſeems to have on mind and mind on body, as they happen in the human ſyſtem. But he employed the divine power and wiſdom in another manner, and once for all as it were. According to him, every ſoul has a certain ſeries of perceptions, deſires, volitions, &c. Every body a certain ſeries of motions that are determined by the mechanical diſpoſitions of the machine, combined with the various impreſſions of outward objects that may be made on it. I do not enter into the difference he makes between the human ſyſtem, and the general animal ſyſtem in which he ſuppoſes that the ſame ſouls have been united to the ſame organized bodies from the creation, and that theſe animals do not, properly ſpeaking, die. In the reſpect in which I quote this wonderful hypotheſis here, the caſe of all theſe ſyſtems is the ſame. In every one of them the ſoul and body do not correſpond becauſe they are united, but they are united becauſe they correſponded by a praeeſtabliſhed harmony antecedent to their union, and in which LEIBNITZ found, no doubt, that ſufficient reaſon, which is in all caſes the reaſon that the hypotheſis requires. Soul and body are united like two tallies that fitted one another before their union; but with this difference, which makes the metaphyſical caſe the ſtronger, they were ſo fitted ſeparately and independantly of one another. BOUNCE felt pain when ſhe was kicked, if BOUNCE was ever kicked: and ſo ſhe would have felt it, if ſhe had had no body at all in the ſame moment. A fair day invited you to walk in your garden; BOUNCE galloped after you: and ſo you both would have done, if you had had no ſouls at all. This hypotheſis gives me no horror: and every time it comes into my thoughts, I laugh as if I was at a puppet ſhew.

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That of father Malebranche muſt not be forgot in this place. It ſtands between the other two in one reſpect: it is neither ſo horrible as the firſt, nor ſo comical as the laſt. But it is I think the ſtrongeſt inſtance that can be produced of a fine genius wrought up to a degree of madneſs by metaphyſical ſpeculation and hypothetical enthuſiaſm, unleſs the African biſhop St. Austin may be compared with him. Malebranche then ſpecifies certain manners in which we may have ideas of outward objects, the firſt of which is agreeable to the phaenomena and to the common notion derived from them, and the laſt of which is his own wild hypotheſis. He even ventures to aſſert that there is no other manner in which we can have ideas of theſe objects. The aſſertion is a bold one; ſince it aſſumes that God cannot ordain any ſyſtem of body and mind which we cannot comprehend. On this foundation he proceeds to ſhew how inſufficient all the other ways are of accounting for theſe ideas, and to introduce his own. If I was to enter into a detail of particulars it would be eaſy to ſhew, with the help of Mr. Locke's examination, and even without this help, that the hypotheſis conſiſts of little elſe than words that have abſolutely no meaning, than figurative expreſſions that cannot be applied to his ſubject without the utmoſt abſurdity, than inconſiſtencies and palpable contradictions. But I believe this will appear to be no unjuſt charge, even by the very little I ſhall ſay. His hypotheſis in ſhort is this. We cannot perceive any thing that is not intimately united to our ſouls. Our ſouls are unextended beings in this place, tho in another he ſays they have extenſion, a narrow one indeed; but narrow or broad it is ſtill extenſion. Now there being no proportion between the ſoul and material things, theſe cannot be united to it, nor conſequently be perceived by it. Our ſouls are indeed united to our bodies; but there is a manner of

union neceſſary to perception, and another not ſo, neither of which is explained. God, who is a ſubſtance and the only intelligible ſubſtance, is intimately united to our ſouls by his preſence. He is the place of ſpirits, as ſpace is in one ſenſe the place of bodies: and ſince he muſt have in himſelf the ideas of all the beings he has created (for without theſe ideas, that is, without our manner of knowing this philoſopher preſumes to affirm that he could not have created them) we may ſee theſe ideas in God, as he is pleaſed to ſhew them to us: but the good father having no where explained how God ſhews them to us, he leaves us in the ſame ignorance in which he found us. It has been obſerved that this hypotheſis bears ſome reſemblance to that of DEMOCRITUS, who aſſumed that our ideas are God. One idea, that which we have of God, is, I am ſure, by this hypotheſis, God himſelf; ſince it is affirmed that this idea is uncreated. The words are worth quoting.— "On "ne peut pas concevoir que l'idée d'un être infiniment par- "fait, qui eſt celle que nous avons de Dieu, ſoit quelque "choſe de crée." I might mention a multitude of other notions quite unintelligible or repugnant to our cleareſt ideas and moſt certain experience; ſuch as theſe, for inſtance, that we have the idea of infinite before we have the idea of finite, and that we think of all being before we think of any particular being; but I have ſaid enough to ſhew that altho this writer has deſtroyed the intentional ſpecies of the peripatetics (for he dwells chiefly on our ideas of ſight yet he has left it juſt as poſſible, and vaſtly more probable, that God has ordained certain ideas in the mind to be excited by certain motions of body, in a manner incomprehenſible by us, than that we ſee theſe ideas in his ſubſtance in a manner alike incomprehenſible.

I IMAGINE that the plain man is by this time pleaſed to ſee common ſenſe force men back, after a tedious round of philo-

ſophical rambles, to the very point from which he has never ſtirred; for ſo it muſt do unleſs we renounce this gift of God, in favor of human authority. The authority may be great; but the greater it is the more ſtrongly do theſe examples of error ſhew how little the greateſt, how abſurd the wiſeſt, how ignorant the moſt learned of men become, when they preſume to puſh beyond the bounds that God has ſet to human enquiries. There is ſo much warning given, the high road to knowledge is ſo direct, and the bounds of it are ſo ſtrongly marked, that they who go out of this road in the vain hope of paſſing them by a ſhorter way, as well as they who do not ſtop when they are conducted no longer by the phaenomena, but hope that metaphyſics can carry them forward when phyſics cannot, are inexcuſable.

FONTENELLE, in the elogy he made of NEWTON before the French Academy, compares DES CARTES with him. He ſays that "DES CARTES, taking a bold flight, meaned to place himſelf at the ſource of all things, and to make himſelf maſter of the firſt principles of them by ſome clear and fundamental ideas, that he might have nothing more to do than to deſcend from thence down to the phaenomena of nature as to neceſſary conſequences. He ſays that the other, more timid or more modeſt, ſet out leaning on the phaenomena, that he might by their means remount to the unknown principles of things, which he reſolved to admit whatever the chain of conſequences ſhewed them to be. One, ſays he, ſets out from what he underſtands clearly, to find the cauſe of what he ſees. The other ſets out from what he ſees, to diſcover the cauſe, be it plain or obſcure. He concludes by ſaying that the evident principles of one do not always lead him to the phaenomena ſuch as they are, and the phaenomena do not always lead the other to principles evident enough."

" enough." I have quoted this paſſage at length; becauſe, as much perplexed as it is by an artful abuſe of words, it will ſerve much better to ſet in a full light the truth I would inculcate, than to conſtitute an equality of merit in natural philoſophy between DES CARTES and NEWTON. I will make, therefore, a ſhort commentary on it. The deſign of the former, as it is here repreſented, was not a bold flight, but an extravagant undertaking. It is honor enough to the latter, that he made greater advances towards the firſt principles of things than any of thoſe who went before him: and this would have been honor enough for DES CARTES too, if he could have acquired it. This philoſopher might have clear ideas; for ideas that are falſe may be very clear perceptions in the mind, and eſpecially in the mind of one who reaſoned on a certain lively inward ſentiment of evidence, as well as on ideas really clear and diſtinct. But fundamental ideas, if there be any meaning in the word, he could have none, or none that were ſufficient in the method he purſued. Many of thoſe he employed to make himſelf maſter of the firſt principles of things could be only hypothetical, ſince he did not frame them on the phaenomena, nor connect them by the phaenomena, according to NEWTON's method; which was not timid, but wiſe as well as modeſt. What an immenſe diſtance was there between any thing he could underſtand clearly in his method, and the cauſes of what he ſaw? And how could the intermediate ideas be framed? Nay, how does it appear that he underſtood clearly the things which he is ſaid to have underſtood ſo, and from which he ſet out, when he took extenſion alone to conſtitute the eſſence of matter, and thought alone that of ſoul? Is it not plain that his evident principles were aſſumed, as they often are, purely for the ſake of what was to follow? DES CARTES might in his method invent, as he did, whatever principles imagination ſuggeſted to him, and with the oſtentatious appearance

of a compleat ſyſtem ſhew us an univerſe of his own, not of God's making. NEWTON reſolved to invent none; for he reſolved to admit ſuch only as he ſhould be led to diſcover by a chain of conſequences that carried him up to them, imperfectly perhaps but ſurely; ſuch as God made them to be, not ſuch as he gueſſed they might be. The one might and did fall into error. The other could only fall ſhort of the knowledge he ſought. He fell ſhort of it. Like COLUMBUS, he diſcovered a new world: and like him, he left the diſcovery to be purſued by others. Our knowledge of nature can ſo little be complete, that the very appearance of a complete ſyſtem is a reaſon perhaps to ſuſpect it of being etched out by fancy. Let us ſuppoſe a philoſopher to ariſe and to purſue the diſcoveries of NEWTON with equal ſucceſs. Let us ſuppoſe that, by dint of experiment and geometry, he confirms the doctrine of attraction or gravitation not as a property, not as an attribute of matter if you will, but barely as a new phaenomenon, and that he diſcovers a new kind of pulſion or ſome other phyſical cauſe of it. Attraction, which gives us now the idea of a cauſe, and which may be, notwithſtanding all the ſilly abſtract reaſoning to the contrary, a real property of matter, will give us then the idea of an effect, as this new cauſe muſt do in it's turn as ſoon as ſome further cauſe is diſcovered; and as that further cauſe muſt do likewiſe as ſoon as ſome other ſtill more remote is brought into light. Thus we ſhall be always ſeeking, and always to ſeek. But is this to recal the occult qualities of the ſchools? FONTENELLE makes himſelf, not NEWTON, ridiculous, when he does more than inſinuate this reproach in the ſame elogy. If NEWTON's philoſophy had terminated, like that of the ſcholaſtics, in occult qualities, it would not have riſen in reputation as faſt as it was underſtood: and if that of DES CARTES had not been too often, like theirs, merely hypothe-

tical and extravagantly ſo, it had not been demoliſhed on ſo many ſides as faſt as it was examined.

But I return to obſerve, that the compariſon between theſe two methods is to be applied to our reſearches about ſpiritual as well as corporeal nature, and to confirm what I have ſaid concerning them. When I conſider how little knowledge the phaenomena give us of one, and that we are not able to go by their help a ſtep beyond the firſt appearances, whilſt we extend our knowledge of the other wider and carry it higher in the order of cauſes; I am ready to think that God, who leaves us in many caſes to collect his will, as he has made us able to collect it, from his works, ſhews manifeſtly in this caſe how repugnant it is to the deſigns of his all-wiſe providence that we ſhould attempt to acquire knowledge of ſoul or ſpirit, and how conformable it is to theſe deſigns that we ſhould employ our induſtry and penetration to acquire knowledge of body, terreſtrial and celeſtial; in order to promote in general the advantages of human life, and thoſe particularly that reſult from an adoration of the ſupreme Being in a contemplation of his works.

It has been ſaid, it is a common-place topic, that Infidels, for ſuch is every one called by ſome men who does not ſubſcribe to all they advance even without proof, are deſirous to keep God at a diſtance from them, whereas they ought to conſider that it is in "him they live and move and have their "being." This charge cannot be laid juſtly againſt any man who believes a God; for a God without the attributes of an all-perfect Being cannot be the ſupreme Being, how inconſiſtently ſoever ſome of the antients might reaſon about the Divinity. For my own part, I am firmly perſuaded that there is a ſupreme Being, the fountain of all exiſtence, by the

efficacy of whoſe will the whole univerſe was made and is governed as well as preſerved; in a word, who is the firſt efficient cauſe of all things, and on whom all his creatures depend. But for this very reaſon, and becauſe I have this awful ſenſe of the ſupreme Being, I do not preſume to familiarize myſelf with him, as the men who bring this charge are apt to do. That he is the firſt efficient cauſe, I acknowledge; but I am on my guard againſt thoſe who preſume to penetrate further into the machinery of the univerſe, and the order of ſecond cauſes, than the phaenomena, that is, than his works, ſhed a light on their enquiries: or who are ſo bold as to deny the efficiency of ſecond cauſes, becauſe they are not able to account for them, and who employ the firſt cauſe on every occaſion, for whoſe action they are as little able to account. This is a common practice, and it has produced a ſort of profane and even blaſphemous enthuſiaſm in philoſophy. Des Cartes, Leibnitz, Malebranche, our friend perhaps, and all thoſe who not contented to know, what they may know in ſome degree, the things that are, make hypotheſes of what they can know in no degree, how and why theſe things are as they are; all theſe men, I ſay, have run into this practice, and have ſpread the enthuſiaſm.

Our enquiries into the nature of things and into their cauſes may be ſtopped in two different manners. They may be ſtopped or delayed by the difficulties that are in the way, or by the want of ſome of thoſe extraordinary genii that are ſent into the world, now and then, to penetrate into the ſecrets of nature, and to unfold them, as it were, by degrees. Few of theſe men ariſe. They are as rare as comets, or any of the leſs frequent phaenomena that they obſerve: and when one of them has made a certain progreſs, if he is not interrupted in it by death, it often happens that he ſtops

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in his philoſophical career, as if his ſtrength were ſpent. The courſe is long as well as difficult. Relays are neceſſary, if I may ſay ſo, to carry knowledge even to the human goal: and they are not always at hand. When enquiries are thus ſtopped, and yet the progreſs that has been made ſhews that which remains to be made, other men are encouraged to proceed: lucky incidents may happen to ſhorten their labor, and the intended diſcovery may ſeem to be only delayed. This is, I ſuppoſe, the caſe of the longitude: and we cannot doubt but that it is ſo of many other objects of philoſophical enquiry.

But our progreſs is abſolutely ſtopped, inſtead of being delayed only, in many more inſtances: and in theſe it is that all efforts are vain, and all induſtry for that reaſon impertinent. I will explain myſelf on this important point as clearly as I can. Beſides the general idea we have of an univerſal relation of cauſe and effect between the ſupreme Being and his works, all the phaenomena give us particular ideas of the ſame relation. It is evidently in the ſyſtem of divine wiſdom that they ſhould do ſo; and the uſe of it in all the affairs of human life is manifeſt. Every phaenomenon is a cauſe to us, when it is conſidered relatively to thoſe that appear to be the effects of it. Every phaenomenon is an effect to us, when it is conſidered relatively to thoſe that appear to be the cauſes of it. Thus God has willed that things ſhould be perceived by us: and if we could diſcover the whole chain up to the firſt effects of Almighty efficacy, ſuch they would appear, I preſume, to us. But humanity cannot ſoar ſo high, nor approach ſo near the throne of God; tho the ſieur De Fontenelle aſſures us, that Des Cartes took his firſt flight thither, at leaſt, ſince he directed it to the ſource and to the firſt principles of all being. As far as we can acquire ideas of

of the phaenomena, and are able to compare them, and to proceed by induction from them, ſo far, and ſo far only, are we able to acquire the knowledge we are ſo fond of, the knowledge of cauſes, of corporeal cauſes, that I may keep to the uſual diſtinction, from the corporeal phaenomena, and of ſpiritual cauſes from the ſpiritual phaenomena. When we can acquire no more of theſe ideas we are at the end of our line of knowledge in either kind: and as this happens ſometimes after a long proceſs of enquiry, ſo it happens ſometimes at our firſt ſetting out.

But this is not all. As our diſcoveries of the phaenomena, by which we acquire ideas of ſecond cauſes, are thus variouſly limited, ſo there is another uniform and univerſal limitation of our knowledge concerning them. Whatever knowledge we acquire of apparent cauſes, we can acquire none of real cauſality, by which I mean neither mode nor modal entity, according to the jargon of the ſchools, but plainly that force, that power, that virtue whatever it be, by which one being acts on another, and becomes a cauſe. We may call this by different names, according to the different effects of it; but to know it in it's firſt principles, to know the nature of it, would be to know as God himſelf knows, and, therefore, this will be always unknown to us in cauſes that ſeem to be moſt under our inſpection, as well as in thoſe that are the moſt remote from it. This knowledge, however, is that which philoſophers mean to attain, or it is impoſſible to ſay what they mean in many caſes, and for want of which they employ ſo familiarly the firſt efficient cauſe on every turn. They are doubly ridiculous. They ſeek and pretend to diſcover cauſes when they only ſuppoſe phaenomena; and when they have diſcovered a real actual cauſe in it's effects by the phaenomena, they reject it becauſe they cannot conceive it's cauſality,

ſality, nor aſſign a ſufficient reaſon why and how it is as it is.

If all the objections to Newton's ſyſtem were anſwered; if the facts and calculations were over and over confirmed, a diſciple of Leibnitz would ſtill maintain that there was no ſufficient reaſon for attraction as an eſſential property, or as an attribute of matter: and that it could not, therefore, be admitted as a cauſe how much ſoever appearances might favor ſuch an opinion; ſince nothing muſt be admitted to exiſt unleſs philoſophers are able to ſhew the ſufficient reaſon of it's exiſtence, and to explain it's cauſality. Well might attraction be exploded by theſe philoſophers, ſince extenſion itſelf run ſome riſque, and had been certainly denied to be an eſſential property of matter, if Leibnitz had not diſcovered the ſufficient reaſon of it in non-extenſion. His monades in this ſyſtem may be called immaterial atoms, as properly as he calls ſouls immaterial automates in his ſyſtem of a pre-eſtabliſhed harmony: and his reaſoning in both will appear intelligible to none but his implicit diſciples; as his letter to the chemiſts who ſearched for the philoſopher's ſtone at Nuremberg, which procured him admiſſion into their ſociety, was intelligible to them, tho he did not underſtand it himſelf.

It will be agreed, I think, that, on the ſuppoſition I have made above, attraction would paſs, in every mind untouched by the delirium of metaphyſics, for a ſufficient cauſe; tho the ſufficient reaſon of it could not be given, nor the cauſality of it be explained. Now I would aſk whether the conſcious knowledge we have of the reciprocal action of body and mind be not founded in greater certainty than the knowledge we ſhould have of this conatus accedendi, this mutual tendency of body to body? It muſt be allowed to be ſo. I would aſk, therefore, ſince

ſince he who ſhould deny in this caſe the attracting, gravitating power to be a property of matter would deſerve laughter inſtead of attention, as much as he did whilſt he doubted in the ſame manner of extenſion, till the ſagacious LEIBNITZ had found the ſufficient reaſon of it in non-extenſion, or rather in non-entity; I would aſk, I ſay, what he deſerves who denies the reciprocal action of mind and body, becauſe he knows no more than that there is ſuch an action, and becauſe he is unable to diſcover by what powers, and in what manner this action is produced?

IF we are conſcious that we think at all, we are conſcious that we perceive ideas, and that we will actions. We are conſcious, in one caſe, that the cauſe is without us, and the effect within us. We are equally conſcious, in the other, that the cauſe is within us, and that the effect paſſes without us. In one caſe, where we have only a ſenſitive knowledge of the cauſe, tho we have an intuitive knowledge of the effect, we may be deceived as to the former. The ſtick in the water may be ſtrait, tho we perceived it crooked: and the tower at a great diſtance from us may be ſquare, tho we perceived it round. I chuſe theſe trite examples which have been employed by all thoſe who would perſuade us to diſtruſt our ſenſes, thoſe inlets of all our knowledge, and which prove for me, on this occaſion, better than for them on the occaſion on which they urge them. We try our perceptions over and over again; we rectify by experience the deceptions to which they are liable: and all theſe perceptions, the falſe as well as the true, confirm the opinion, if it may be called merely an opinion, that they are cauſed immediately by outward objects acting on our organs, whether we will or no, in conſequence of particular principles or powers utterly unknown to us, and conformably to general laws, ſome of which we are able

to diſcover. In the other caſe, where we have intuitive knowledge of the cauſe, and only ſenſitive knowledge of the effect, either we have really no knowledge at all, and our whole ſyſtem is a ſyſtem of illuſion, which it would be ſurely impious to aſſert; or we know that there is an immediate action or influence, which amounts to the ſame, of mind on body. No man in his ſenſes ever doubted, and I am therefore perſuaded that DES CARTES did not doubt, that volition, an act of the mind, determined the motion of his arms and legs whenever he moved them; tho the intereſt of his hypotheſis, which concerns all theſe men much more than that of truth, obliged him to maintain the contrary, as it obliged him to advance the other paradox mentioned above concerning animal automates.

THUS have philoſophers in all ages amuſed mankind with ſyſtems of imaginary knowledge, raiſed on fantaſtical ideas and notions, rather than confine themſelves within the limits of real knowledge. Inſtead of fixing our opinions by evident truth, and giving the mind any ſolid foundation whereon to reſt, they have involved us in doubts, and eternized diſpute. Like NOCTAMBULES, they have ſtaggered about, and joſtled one another in their dreams. Since the torch of experimental philoſophy has been lighted up, theſe hypothetical reaſonings have been exploded, or elſe confined under certain conditions in all that relates to corporeal nature. But the abuſe has continued in all that relates to ſpiritual nature: and modern philoſophers, like tyrants driven out of one province, have made themſelves amends, as it were, by exerciſing a more arbitrary power in another. The exerciſe of it in this deſerves, however, to be reſtrained more than in the former. The ſpiritual nature of our ſouls, ſuch as it is now conceived to be, ſuch as authority, and among others that of a council, obliges that

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it ſhould be taught, is an hypotheſis aſſumed on very precarious grounds, and in oppoſition to thoſe that are the grounds of every other allowable hypotheſis. How abſurd, therefore, is it in philoſophers to aſſume on an hypotheſis much more than they would venture to aſſume on real knowledge? How abſurd is it in the reſt of mankind to give any credit to them when they do ſo?

But there is a further objection to this proceeding drawn from the unavoidable conſequences of it, which ſhould render it odious to every man, who will not ſacrifice the integrity of theiſm to the artifice of minds fraught with vanity, and ſtimulated by curioſity. The notion, which theſe metaphyſical reaſoners have framed about the human ſoul or ſpirit, makes them ſlide eaſily and almoſt neceſſarily into that familiarity with the father of ſpirits which has been cenſured above, into concluſions little leſs, if at all leſs, than blaſphemous. Whilſt philoſophers talked of corporeal nature logically, that is, improperly, or on ſuppoſed principles of matter and motion, that is, ignorantly, they led themſelves and others into error, but not into ſuch error. Metaphyſicians and divines have this to anſwer for. Spirit is not certainly an univocal term, tho theſe men uſe it as ſuch. God is not a ſyſtem of matter; but he is not therefore a ſpirit, ſuch as we conceive ſpirits to be: he is not therefore united to our ſouls by an inconceivable preſence or union, nor even by any gradation of ſpirits up to him; for between him and the higheſt created being the diſtance muſt be ſtill infinite. Thus we ſhould think and ſpeak of God. But the men we have to do with here have accuſtomed themſelves to think in the ſame manner, and to ſpeak in the ſame ſtile, of the divine and human ſpirit, with no other difference than that of adding infinite to the one, and finite to the other. They

conceive them both to be alike immaterial beings, and ſubſtances too, as if they, or DES CARTES, who determined that there are but two ſubſtances, knew this any better than SPINOZA knew that there is but one, or than I, who believe there may be ſeveral, know how many, or what they are. It is no wonder that ſuch notions of a community, or union of ſpirits between God and man, ſhould encourage metaphyſicians and divines to draw the Deity down to their level, as their ſeveral hypotheſes require, whilſt they affect to raiſe themſelves up to his, if I may be allowed to uſe expreſſions which are no more than proper to ſignify their attempts. They do in effect ſpiritualize all the groſs conceptions of ignorant and ſuperſtitious men, that is, they ſay much the ſame things in a leſs intelligible manner: and the preſence of God, according to MALEBRANCHE, and according to MOSES, differs in little elſe. Beſides which, if we believe what they affirm, MALEBRANCHE had in the Word, or God's eternal reaſon, an inviſible, and the high prieſt of the Jews in the tabernacle a viſible Shecinah to interrogate.

AFTER all theſe reflections which I have thrown upon paper as they occurred to my thoughts, and as the frequent interruptions to which I am expoſed would give me leave, nay, after all thoſe which they ſuggeſt, or which a man of better parts, more knowledge, and more leiſure would be able to make, I doubt not but our plain man would be told that the hypotheſes which have been mentioned deſerve much reſpect, notwithſtanding all that has been ſaid againſt them, ſince they were intended to ſupport the opinion of the immateriality and immortality of the ſoul, and by conſequence of the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate, which are the great bonds that attach men to revealed religion. This he would be told, and he would be aſked whether he preſumes to deny the truth of

theſe doctrines in general, whatever he may think of ſome particular notions that philoſophers may have entertained concerning them? His anſwer might be to this effect, that it would be for the intereſt of theſe and ſeveral other doctrines to let them reſt on the authority of revelation; that to make them matter of philoſophical ſpeculation is to make them diſputable, and that to make them diſputable is to unfix them in the minds of men; ſince in the natural order of things revelation may confirm what philoſophy teaches; but philoſophy can give no confirmation, nor any further authority to what revelation has taught; and ſince, if it could do ſo in other caſes, it could not do it in theſe, where queſtions that have been controverted in all ages among philoſophers are concerned. He might add that, revelation a-part, he ſaw no poſitive nor determining proof of any of theſe doctrines; that all the phaenomena from our birth to our death ſeem repugnant to the immateriality and immortality of the ſoul, that he is forced to conclude with LUCRETIUS,

" ——————gigni pariter cum corpore, et unà
" Creſcere, ſentimus, pariterque feneſcere mentem."

that God had given him reaſon to diſtinguiſh and to judge, and external and internal ſenſe by which to perceive and to reflect; but that this very reaſon ſhewed him the abſurdity of embracing an opinion concerning body and mind which neither of theſe ſenſes ſupports; that how ſhort and imperfect ſoever the knowledge acquired by obſervation of the phaenomena might be, he was contented with it, becauſe it was knowledge acquired in God's way, that is, in the only way God has opened to our enquiries about the nature of things corporeal or ſpiritual: nay further, that if he could ſuſpect himſelf to be deceived in this way, he would be contented ſtill; he would

conclude

conclude on this and other occaſions that whether things appear to him as they are abſolutely, and ſuch as the ſupreme intelligence knows them to be, or not, they appear to him ſuch as it is fit for his nature that they ſhould appear to him. On this undoubted truth he would reſt his mind, inſtead of perplexing it about indeterminable queſtions, and of ſtruggling preſumptuouſly and vainly to know things otherwiſe than his nature and theirs admit that he ſhould know them.

On ſuch principles as theſe, tho he could not affirm, he would not deny, the immortality of the ſoul. What indeed ſhould tempt him to do ſo? In whatever world, in whatever ſtate he is, he knows that the ſame God governs. What then has he to fear in one more than in another? Nothing ſurely, if he thinks as he ought to think of the all-perfect Being. Such God is. Let us not therefore humanize him. Let us not meaſure his perfections by ours, much leſs let us aſcribe to him, as every ſyſtem of theology does, under the notion of goodneſs, what would be partiality, nor under the notion of juſtice what would be cruelty in man. Let us not preſume ſo much as to aſcribe our perfections to him, even according to the higheſt conceptions we are able to frame of them, tho we reject every imperfection conceivable by us, when it is imputed to him. "As "we muſt not imagine with the Anthropomorphites (it is "Malebranche* who ſpeaks well in this place, tho very in-"conſiſtently with what he ſays in others,) that God has the "human figure, becauſe it ſeems to us the moſt perfect; we "muſt not think neither that the mind of God has human "thoughts, nor that it is like to ours, becauſe we know no-"thing more perfect than our own minds." Such theology as this, and ſurely it is orthodox, makes our plain man to be flattered, not terrified, with any faint appearance of immortality

* Lib. 3. p. 2. c. 9.

lity in proſpect, like TULLY, SENECA, and other philoſophers, who ſaw no more grounds in any thing they knew of the nature of the ſoul for this expectation, than he ſees. He is ready to ſay of this immortality, what the auditor ſays in the firſt Tuſculan diſputation, "me verò delectat; idque primum "ita eſſe velim, deinde, etiamſi non ſit, mihi tamen perſua-"deri velim."

HE might very reaſonably aſk the metaphyſical divine for what reaſon he clogs the belief of the ſoul's immortality with that of it's immateriality ſince the former is ſufficient to anſwer all the ends of religion? The doctrine of future rewards and puniſhments (which is, no doubt, a great reſtraint on men, and which would be a greater, if it was not ſo ſcandalouſly abuſed by the ambition and avarice of prieſts) ſuppoſes the immortality of the ſoul only: and it is much more eaſy to make men conceive that it is immortal by the good pleaſure of God, tho material, than that it is an immaterial ſpirit, and immortal by the neceſſity of it's nature, as God is ſelf-exiſtent by the neceſſity of his. One may wonder that men, who have adopted ſo many of the whimſical notions which they found in PLATO, ſhould not have borrowed an hint that they might have found there, or that they rejected perhaps when they found it. The hint I mean is that of ſouls mortal by their nature, that is, material, but ſuch as ſhould never die. "So-"lubiles, ſed diſſolvendae nunquam." "Since you are gene-"rated, you are mortal, but you ſhall not die; for my will is "ſtrong enough to repair the defects of your nature," ſays the ſupreme Being to the younger gods, the gods born of gods in the Timaeus; and it is the leaſt abſurd thing PLATO makes him ſay or do on that occaſion. The neglect of this paſſage may be imputed to ſome theological purpoſes that ſeem to be better ſerved by the hypotheſis of immaterial ſouls, than by any

other. But the vanity of the human heart, which has been flattered by divines in all ages, was to be flattered on. What ſerved beſt to this purpoſe was taken from PLATO: and how it was improved we need look no further than the Tuſculan, juſt now quoted, to find. There TULLY, after a ridiculous panegyric on the human mind, which improved by philoſophy he thinks able to diſcover all things in heaven and on earth, all that exiſts, in it's beginning, progreſſion and end, runs a very profane parallel between the divine and human mind. If the firſt "be air or fire, ſuch is the laſt." If there be a fifth element, that new nature which "ARISTOTLE firſt introduced, "it muſt be common to both. Whatever has ſenſe, intelli-"gence, will, and the principles of life, is celeſtial and divine, "and therefore neceſſarily eternal." This is the nature of man: and "God himſelf cannot be conceived any other way," than by analogy to it. That we frame our conceptions of the divine intelligence as well as well as we can, by analogy to our own, is true. We have no other way of framing them. But it will not follow that his nature is analogous to ours, nor that ours is like his, "Mens ſoluta quaedam et libera, ſegregata ab omni "concretione mortali, omnia ſentiens et movens, ipſaque prae-"dita motu ſempiterno." Thus abſurdly however did the diſciples of PLATO flatter human nature: and, finding in the bible that we are made after the image of God, our divines have interpreted the paſſage according to theſe prejudices. They will not ſay directly, I ſuppoſe, that our ſouls are a portion of the divine eſſence, but what they ſay ſometimes means this or nothing, and what they ſay always is but little different from it. Strange vanity! as they aſſume themſelves to be expoſed to eternal damnation, and the reſt of mankind to be almoſt entirely damned, rather than not aſſume that their ſouls are immortal; ſo this immortality would not have charms ſufficient for them, if it was not aſſerted to be eſſential to the nature of their ſouls.

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THUS, I believe, our plain man would leave the matter: and thus I leave it too; having ſaid, I hope, enough to ſhew that the fondneſs philoſophers have to raiſe hypotheſes that cannot be raiſed on real ideas, ſuch as have a known foundation in nature, that is, a known conformity with exiſtence, is a principal occaſion on which the mind exerciſes it's artifice in framing ſuch ideas and notions as are merely fantaſtical. That the mind exerciſes the ſame ſeveral other ways, and in ſome leſs obviouſly than in this, as it has been hinted above, I know full well. But, enough having been ſaid to ſhew that human knowledge is imperfect and precarious in it's original, as well as ſlow and confined in it's progreſs, and by one great example, which may ſerve inſtar omnium, that they, who pretend to guide the reaſon of mankind and to improve human knowledge, do nothing better in matters of the firſt philoſophy, than ſubſtitute that which is imaginary in the place of that which is real, or in addition to it, in favor of their prejudices, their paſſions, and their intereſts; enough has been ſaid for an eſſay concerning the Nature, Extent, and Reality of Human Knowledge.

End of the THIRD VOLUME.

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